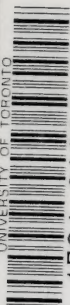


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



3 1761 00690989 9



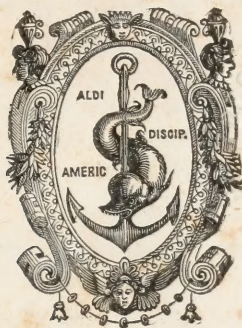
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

PAROCHIAL SERMONS.

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D.

VICAR OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN'S, OXFORD, AND FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE.



SIX VOLUMES, LONDON EDITION,

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:

D. APPLETON AND CO., 200, BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA:

GEORGE S. APPLETON, 148, CHESTNUT-STREET,

M DCCC XLIII.

324298
10. 2. 36.

H. LUDWIG, PRINTER,
72 Vesey-st., N. Y.

CONTENTS

TO THE FOURTH VOLUME OF THE LONDON EDITION.

SERMON I.

THE STRICTNESS OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.

ROMANS vi. 18.

PAGE

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness 1

SERMON II.

OBEDIENCE WITHOUT LOVE, AS INSTANCED IN THE
CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

NUMBERS xxii. 38.

The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak . . . 11

SERMON III.

MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SINGLE SINS.

NUMBERS xxxii. 23.

Be sure your sin will find you out 22

SERMON IV.

ACCEPTANCE OF RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES COMPULSORY.

LUKE xiv. 23.

And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges,
and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled . . . 31

SERMON V.

RELiance ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES.

LUKE xvii. 10.

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say,
We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty
to do 39

SERMON VI.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SOUL.

ECCLES. xii. 7.

The spirit shall return unto God, who gave it 47

SERMON VII.

MICAH vii. 8, 9.

CHASTISEMENT AMID MERCY.

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ; when I fall, I shall arise ; when
I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the
indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him - - 55

SERMON VIII.

PEACE AND JOY AMID CHASTISEMENT.

JOB xiii. 15.

Though ye slay me, yet will I trust in Him - - - - 68

SERMON IX.

THE STATE OF GRACE.

ROMANS v. 1, 2.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus
Christ ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein
we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God - - - 78

SERMON X.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT.

2 TIM. ii. 10.

I endure all things for the elect's sake ; that they may also obtain the
salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory - - - 88

SERMON XI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

PSALM cxlv. 10, 11.

All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy saints give thanks unto
Thee : they show the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power 98

SERMON XII.

THE CHURCH A HOME FOR THE LONELY.

EPH. ii. 6.

Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places
in Christ Jesus - - - - 108

SERMON XIII.

THE INVISIBLE WORLD.

2 COR. iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which
are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things
which are not seen are eternal. - - - - 117

CONTENTS.

v

SERMON XIV.

THE GREATNESS AND LITTLENESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

GEN. xlvii. 9.

The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years :
few and evil have the days of the years of my life been ; and have
not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in
the days of their pilgrimage - - - - - 125

SERMON XV.

MORAL EFFECTS OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

PSALM xxvii. 4.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require ; even that I
may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold
the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His Temple - - - 133

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD.

JOHN i. 5.

The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not - 141

SERMON XVII.

CHRIST MANIFESTED IN REMEMBRANCE.

JOHN xvi. 14.

He shall glorify Me - - - - - 149

SERMON XVIII.

THE GAINSAING OF KORAH.

JUDE 11.

Wo unto them ; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily
after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of
Core - - - - - 157

SERMON XIX.

THE MYSTERIOUSNESS OF OUR PRESENT BEING.

PSALM cxxxix. 14.

I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made ; marvellous
are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well - - - 166

SERMON XX.

THE VENTURES OF FAITH.

MATT. xx. 22.

They say unto Him, We are able - - - - - 174

SERMON XXI.

FAITH AND LOVE.

1 Cor. xiii. 2.

Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not
Charity, I am nothing 181

SERMON XXII.

WATCHING.

MARK xiii. 33.

Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is . 188

SERMON XXIII.

KEEPING FAST AND FESTIVAL.

ECCLES. iii. 4:

A time to weep, and a time to laugh: a time to mourn, and a time to
dance 197

CONTENTS

TO THE FIFTH VOLUME OF THE LONDON EDITION.

SERMON I.

WORSHIP, A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S COMING.

(ADVENT.)

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : They shall behold the land
that is very far off - - - - - 205

SERMON II.

REVERENCE, A BELIEF IN GOD'S PRESENCE.

(ADVENT.)

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : They shall behold the land
that is very far off - - - - - 212

SERMON III.

UNREAL WORDS.

(ADVENT.)

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : They shall behold the land
that is very far off - - - - - 221

SERMON IV.

SHRINKING FROM CHRIST'S COMING.

(ADVENT.)

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : They shall behold the land
that is very far off - - - - - 231

SERMON V.

EQUANIMITY.

(CHRISTMAS.)

PHIL. iv. 4.

Rejoice in the Lord alway ; and again I say, Rejoice - - - 233

SERMON VI.

REMEMBRANCE OF PAST MERCIES.

(CHRISTMAS.)

GEN. xxxii. 10.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth,
which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant - - - 246

SERMON VII.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

(CHRISTMAS.)

HEBREWS ii. 11.

Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ; for
which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren - - - 255

SERMON VIII.

THE STATE OF INNOCENCE.

(CHRISTMAS.)

ECCLES. vii. 29.

God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions 262

SERMON IX.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

(CHRISTMAS.)

HEBREWS ii. 16.

For verily He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him
the seed of Abraham - - - - - 272

SERMON X.

RIGHTEOUSNESS NOT OF US, BUT IN US.

(EPIPHANY.)

1 COR. i. 30, 31.

Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom,
and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; that, according
as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord - - - 279

SERMON XI.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT.

(EPIPHANY.)

ROMANS x. 4.

Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth 288

SERMON XII.

THE NEW WORKS OF THE GOSPEL.

(EPIPHANY.)

2 COR. v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away;
behold, all things are become new - - - - - 300

SERMON XIII.

THE STATE OF SALVATION.

(EPIPHANY.)

EPH. iv. 24.

That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness
and true holiness - - - - - 308

SERMON XIV.

TRANSGRESSIONS AND INFIRMITIES.

(EPIPHANY.)

HEBREWS x. 38.

Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul
shall have no pleasure in him - - - - - 318

SERMON XV.

SINS OF INFIRMITY.

(EPIPHANY.)

GAL. v. 17.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and
these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things
that ye would - - - - - 326

SERMON XVI.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY.

(EPIPHANY.)

2 COR. viii. 12.

If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man
hath, and not according to that he hath not - - - - - 333

SERMON XVII.

THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIENCE.

(EPIPHANY.)

2 COR. i. 12.

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity
and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God
we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to
you-ward - - - - - 342

SERMON XVIII.

MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN.

(SEPTUAGESIMA.)

1 Cor. ix. 24.

Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth
the prize? So run, that ye may obtain - - - - - 352

SERMON XIX.

PRESENT BLESSINGS.

(SEPTUAGESIMA.)

PHIL. iv. 18.

I have all, and abound: I am full - - - - - 361

SERMON XX.

ENDURANCE, THE CHRISTIAN'S PORTION.

(SEXAGESIMA.)

GEN. xlii. 36.

All these things are against me - - - - - 369

SERMON XXI.

AFFLICTION, A SCHOOL OF COMFORT.

(SEXAGESIMA.)

2 Cor. i. 4.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort
them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves
are comforted of God - - - - - 378

SERMON XXII.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD, THE STAY OF THE SOUL.

(QUINQUAGESIMA.)

ROMANS viii. 15.

Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have re-
ceived the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father - - - 385

SERMON XXIII.

LOVE, THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

(QUINQUAGESIMA.)

1 Cor. xiii. 1.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not
charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal - - - 393

SERMON XXIV.

THE POWER OF THE WILL.

(QUINQUAGESIMA.)

EPH. vi. 10.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might 401

CONTENTS

TO THE SIXTH VOLUME OF THE LONDON EDITION.

SERMON I.

FASTING A SOURCE OF TRIAL.

(LENT.)

MATT. iv. 2.

And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards
an hungered - - - - - 413

SERMON II.

LIFE THE SEASON OF REPENTANCE.

(LENT.)

GEN. xxvii. 34.

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and
exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also,
O my father - - - - - 421

SERMON III.

APOSTOLIC ABSTINENCE A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIANS.

(LENT.)

1 TIM. v. 23.

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and
thine often infirmities. - - - - - 427

SERMON IV.

CHRIST'S PRIVATIONS A MEDITATION FOR CHRISTIANS.

(LENT.)

2 COR. viii. 9.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich,
yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might
be rich - - - - - 435

SERMON V.

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD MADE MAN.

(LENT.)

HEBREWS ix. 11.

Christ being come, a High Priest of good things to come, by a greater
and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not
of this building - - - - - 443

SERMON VI.

THE INCARNATE SON, A SUFFERER AND SACRIFICE.

(LENT.)

PHIL. ii. 3.

Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross - - - 452

SERMON VII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

(LENT.)

JOHN xii. 32.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me - 460

SERMON VIII.

DIFFICULTY OF REALIZING SACRED PRIVILEGES.

(EASTER.)

PSALM cxviii. 24.

This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it - - - - - 466

SERMON IX.

THE GOSPEL SIGN ADDRESSED TO FAITH.

(EASTER.)

MATT. xii. 38.

Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee - - - - - 472

SERMON X.

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

(EASTER.)

John xvi. 16.

A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father - - - - - 481

SERMON XI.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE.

(ESTHER.)

JOHN vi. 56.

This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die - - - - - 490

SERMON XII.

FAITH THE TITLE FOR JUSTIFICATION.

(EASTER.)

MATT. viii. 11.

Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven - - - 500

SERMON XIII.

JUDAISM OF THE PRESENT DAY.

(EASTER.)

HEB. xi. 13.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth - - 512

SERMON XIV.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES.

(EASTER.)

MARK ix. 38, 39.

And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us; and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miriacle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me - - - - - 521

SERMON XV.

RIISING WITH CHRIST.

(ASCENSION.)

COL. iii. 1—3.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God - - - - - 531

SERMON XVI.

WARFARE THE CONDITION OF VICTORY.

(ASCENSION.)

LUKE xxiv. 52, 53.

And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Amen 539

SERMON XVII.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

(ASCENSION.)

REV. xxii. 20.

He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus - - - - - 546

SERMON XVIII.

SUBJECTION OF THE REASON AND FEELINGS TO THE REVEALED WORD.

(ASCENSION.)

2 COR. x. v.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ - - 558

SERMON XIX.

THE GOSPEL PALACES.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

PSALM lxxviii. 69.

He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath
established for ever - - - - - 567

SERMON XX.

THE VISIBLE TEMPLE.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

MATT. xxiii. 17.

Whether is the greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold - 573

SERMON XXI.

OFFERINGS FOR THE SANCTUARY.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

ISAI. lx. 13.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and
the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary, and I will
make the place of My feet glorious - - - - - 581

SERMON XXII.

THE WEAPONS OF SAINTS.

(WHITSUNTIDE.)

MATT. xix. 30.

Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first - - - 591

SERMON XXIII.

FAITH WITHOUT DEMONSTRATION.

(TRINITY.)

JOHN iv. 48.

Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe - - - 600

SERMON XXIV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

(TRINITY.)

MATT. xxviii. 19.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of
the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost - - - 609

SERMON XXV.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

(TRINITY.)

ISAI. vi. 3.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of
Hosts - - - - - 620

PAROCHIAL SERMONS.

VOL. IV.

OF THE LONDON EDITION.

SERMONS, &c.

SERMON I.

THE STRICTNESS OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.

ROMANS vi. 18.

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

IN the passage of which these words form a part, St. Paul insists again and again on the great truth which they declare, that Christians are not their own, but bought with a price, and, as being so, are become the servants or rather the slaves of God and His righteousness; and this, upon their being rescued from the state of nature. The great Apostle is not content with speaking half the truth; he does not merely say that we are set free from guilt and misery, but he adds that we have become the servants of Christ; nay, he uses a word which properly means *slaves*. Slaves are bought and sold; we were by nature slaves to sin and Satan; we are bought by the blood of Christ: we do not cease to be slaves. We no longer indeed belong to our old master; but a master we have, unless slaves on being bought become freemen. We are still slaves, but to a new master, and that master is Christ. He has not bought us, and then set us loose upon the world; but He has done for us what alone could complete His first benefit, bought us to be His servants or slaves. He has given us that only liberty which is

really such, bond-service to Himself; lest if left to ourselves, we should fall back again, as we certainly should, to the cruel bondage from which He redeemed us. But any how, whatever be the consequences it involves, whatever the advantage, whatever the trial, we did not cease to be slaves on being set free from Satan; but we become subject to a new Master, to Him who bought us.

This needs insisting on; for a number of persons, who are not unwilling to confess that they are slaves by nature, from some cause or other have learned to think that they are not bound to any real service at all, now that Christ has set them free. Now if by the word *slavery*, some cruel and miserable state of suffering is meant, such as human masters often inflict on their slaves, in that sense indeed Christians are not slaves, and the word is improper to apply to them; but if by being slaves, is meant that we cannot throw up our service, change our place, and do as we will, in that sense it is literally true, that we are more than servants to Christ, we are, as the text really words it, slaves. Men often speak as if the perfection of human happiness lay in our being free to do or not to do, to choose and to reject. Now we are indeed thus free, as far as this,—that if we do not choose to be Christ's servants, we can go back to that old bondage from which He rescued us, and be slaves again to the powers of evil. But though we are free to make our situation worse, we are not free to be without service or post of any kind. It is not in man's nature to be out of all service and to be self-dependent. We may choose our master, but God or mammon we must serve. We cannot possibly be in a neutral or intermediate state. Such a state does not exist. If we will not be Christ's servants, we are forthwith Satan's; and Christ set us free from Satan only by making us His servants. Satan's kingdom touches upon Christ's, the world touches on the Church; and we cease to be Satan's property by becoming Christ's. We cannot be without a master, such is the law of our nature; yet a number of persons, as I have said, overlook it, and think their Christian liberty lies in being free from all law, even from the law of God. Such an error seems to have obtained even in St. Paul's time, and is noticed in the chapter before us. Men seem to have thought that, since the law of sin was annulled, and the terrors of the law of nature removed, that therefore they were under no law at all; that their own will was their law, and that faith stood in stead of obedience. In opposition to this great mistake St. Paul reminds his brethren in the text, that when they were "made free from *sin*," they "became the servants of *righteousness*." And again, "sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law," that is, the law of nature, "but under grace," or (as he elsewhere expresses it,) "the law of faith,"

or, "the law of the Spirit of life." They were not without a master, but they had a gracious and bountiful one.

He says the same in other Epistles. For instance, "He that is called, being free," (that is, free as regards this world,) "is Christ's servant" or slave. "Ye are bought with a price: be not ye slaves of *men*," but, that is, be slaves of Christ. Again after saying, "slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh," he adds, "for ye are slaves to the Lord Christ." Elsewhere he speaks of himself as "Paul a servant," or slave, as the word really means, "of Jesus Christ;" and again, as "not without law to God, but under the law to Christ."*

Religion then is a necessary service; of course it is a privilege too, but it becomes more and more of a privilege, the more we exercise ourselves in it. The perfect Christian state is that in which our duty and our pleasure are the same, when what is right and true is natural to us, and in which God's "service is perfect freedom." And this is the state towards which all true Christians are tending; it is the state in which the Angels stand; entire subjection to God in thought and deed is their happiness; an utter and absolute captivity of their will to His will, is their fulness of joy and everlasting life. But it is not so with the best of us, except in part. We indeed upon our regeneration have a seed of truth and holiness planted within us, a new law introduced into our nature; but still we have that old nature to subdue, "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."† That is, we have a work, a conflict all through life. We have to master, and bring under all we are, all we do, expelling all disorder and insubordination, and teaching and impressing on every part of us, of soul and body, its due place and duty, till we are wholly Christ's in will, affections, and reason, as we are by profession; in St. Paul's words, "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."‡

Now I may seem to have been saying what every one will at once confess. And yet, after all, nothing perhaps is so rare among those who profess to be Christians as an assent in practice to the doctrine that they are under a law; nothing so rare as strict obedience, unreserved submission to God's will, uniform conscientiousness in doing their duty,—as a few instances will at once show.

Most Christians then will allow in general terms that they are under a law, but then they admit it with a reserve; they claim for themselves

* 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23. Col. iii. 22, 24. Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. ix. 21.

† Eph. iv. 22.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 5.

some dispensing power in their observance of the law. What I am saying is quite independent of the question what is the *standard* of obedience which each man proposes to himself. One man puts the line of his duty higher than another; some men take a low view of it, confining it to mere personal morality; others confine it to their social obligations; others limit it by some conventional law, which is received in particular classes or circles; others include religious observances. But whether men view the law of conscience as high or low, as broad or narrow, few indeed there are who make it a rule to themselves, few there are who make their own notion of it, whatever that be, binding on themselves; few who even profess to act up to it uniformly and consistently. Inquire of the multitude of men, as you meet them in the world, and you will find that one and all think it allowable to put themselves above the law, even according to their own standard of it; to make exceptions and reserves, as if they were absolute sovereigns of their conscience, and had a dispensing power upon occasions.

What is the character of what the world accounts a respectable and religious man, in a high rank or a lower? At best it is such as this. He has a number of good points in his character; but some of these he has by nature, and if others have been acquired by trouble, it is either because outward circumstances compelled him to acquire them, or that he has from nature some active principle within him, of one kind or another, which has exerted itself, and brought other principles under, and rules him. He has acquired a certain self-command, because no one is respected without it. He has been forced into habits of diligence, punctuality, precision, and honesty. He is courteous and obliging; and has learned not to say all he thinks and feels, or to do all he wishes to do, on all occasions. The great mass of men of course are far from having in them so much that is really praiseworthy as this; but I am supposing the best. I am supposing then, that a man's character and station are such that only now and then he will feel his inclinations or his interest to run counter to his duty. Such times constitute his trials; there is nothing to hinder him serving God in an ordinary way, but the proof of his sincerity lies in his conduct on these extraordinary occasions. Now this is the point to which I wish to draw attention; for these very occasions, which alone are his times of trial, are just the times on which he is apt to consider that he has a leave to dispense with the law. He dispenses with it at those very times when it is simply the law of God, without being also the law of self, and of the world. He does what is right, while the road of religion runs along the road of the world; when they part company awhile, he chooses the world, and calls his choice an exception. He does right for

ninety-nine days, but on the hundredth he knowingly and wilfully does wrong ; and if he does not justify, at least he absolves himself in doing it.

For instance ; he *generally* comes to Church, it is his *practice* ; but some urgent business at a certain time presses on him, or some scheme of pleasure tempts him ;—he omits his attendance ; he knows this is wrong, and says so, but it is only once in a way.

Again : he is strictly honest in his dealings ; he speaks the truth, that is, it is his rule to do so ; but if hard pressed, he allows himself now and then in a falsehood, particularly if it is a slight one. He knows he should not ; he confesses it ; but he thinks it cannot be helped ; it is unavoidable from circumstances, as being his only way of escaping some great difficulty. In *such* a case it is, as he says, all fair, and so he gets over it ; that is, in a case where he must either obey God, or incur some temporal disadvantage.

Again : he has learned to curb his temper and his tongue ; but on some unusual provocation they get the better of him. He becomes angry, says what he should not, perhaps curses and swears. Are not all men subject to be overtaken with anger or ill temper ? that is not the point ; the point is this,—that he does not feel compunction afterward, he does not feel he has done any thing which needs forgiveness. On the contrary, he defends himself to himself, on the plea that such language is very *unusual* with him ; he does not understand that he is under a law, which he may not put himself above, which he may not dispense with.

Once more ; he is in general sober and temperate ; but he joins a party of friends and makes merry ; he is tempted to exceed. Next day he says that it is a long time since such thing happened to him ; it is not at all his way ; he hardly touches wine or the like in common. He does not understand he has any sin to repent of, because it is but once in a way.

And now, I suppose, you quite understand what I mean, and I need not say more in explanation. Such men, being thus indulgent to themselves, are indulgent to each other ; they make allowance for all around them, as taking what they give freely. This is the secret of being friends with the world, having a sympathy and a share in its sins. They who are strict with themselves are strict with the world ; but where men grant themselves a certain license of disobedience, they do not draw the line very rigidly as regards others. Conscious of what might be said against themselves, they are cautious what they say against others ; and they meet them on the understanding of a mutual sufferance. They learn to say, that the private habits of their neighbours are nothing to them ; and they hold intercourse with them

only as public men, or members of society, or in the way of business, not at all as with responsible beings having immortal souls. They desire to see and know nothing but what is on the surface ; and they call a man's personal history sacred, because it is sinful. Their sole duty to their neighbour, in their eyes, is not to offend him ; whatever his morals, whatever his creed, is nothing to them. Such are they in mature and advanced life ; in youth they are pliable as well as indulgent, they readily fall in with the ways of the world, as they come across them. They are, and have the praise of being, pleasant, good-tempered and companionable. They are not bad principled, or evilly disposed, or flagrantly irregular, but they are lax. They in no sense live by rule. They have high spirits, and all the natural amiableness which youth has to show, and they generally go right ; but since they have no root in themselves, an accident from within or without, the stirring of a passion, or the incitement of a friend, makes them swerve at once. They swerve, and they have little compunction afterwards ; they forget it. They shrink from the notion of being under a law, and think religion gloomy as imposing it. They like their own way, and without any great extreme of sin, or at least any habits of sin, follow it. They are orderly and well-conducted when among well-conducted people,—at home, for instance ; but they indulge themselves abroad, when temptation comes in their way. They have the world at will ; they are free ; alas ! what a melancholy freedom ! yet in one sense a freedom it is. A religious man must withdraw his eyes from sights which inflame his heart, recollecting our Saviour's caution ; but a man of the world thinks it no harm to gaze where he should not, because he goes no further. A religious man watches his words ; but the other utters whatever his heart prompts, and excuses himself for profane language, on the plea that he means nothing by it. A religious man will scruple about his society ; but the other takes part in jests and excesses, though he condemns them while he shares, but not himself for sharing, and despises those with whom he shares them. He can see life, as it is called. He can go among all sorts of people, for he has no troublesome ceremonial, no rule of religion to shackle him. Perhaps he goes abroad, and then for a time he considers himself to be in disguise, as an unknown person in unknown countries, permitted to fall in with all things bad and good, as they come. Or again, he may be so circumstanced, whatever his station, as to find himself engaged in what he called politics ; and then he thinks that though truth and religion are acertainly all-commanding and all-important, yet still the world could not go on, public business would be at a stand, political parties would be unable to act, all that he really loves and reveres would become but of secondary concern, if

religion refused at all times to give way ever so little. Again ; a religious man carries his religion into his conduct throughout the day ; but lax persons will do many things in private, which they would not like to be known. They will overreach, if they can do it without noise. They will break promises, when made to an inferior. Or, if they have time on their hands, they will be curious and meddlesome ; they will speak against others and spread scandals. They will pry into things which do not concern them, according to their station in life. They will listen where they have no right to listen ; they will read what they have no right to read. Or they will allow themselves in petty thefts, where they think they do no injury, excusing themselves on the plea that what they take will never be missed. Or in matters of trade, they think a certain sort and degree of double-dealing allowable, and no dishonesty. They argue as if it were not their business to be true and just, but of others to find them out ; and as if fraud and cheating did not imply sin in the one party, but dulness in the other. If in humble life, they think it no harm to put on an appearance ; to profess what is not strictly true, if they are to gain by it ; to colour a story ; or to affect to be more religious than they are ; or to pretend to agree in religion with persons from whom they hope something ; or to take up a religion if it is their interest to do so ; or to profess two or three religions at once, when any alms or other benefit is to be given away.

These are a few out of a multitude of traits which mark an easy religion,—the religion of the world, which would cast in its lot with Christian truth, were it not so very strict, and quarrels with it and its upholders, not as if it were not good and right, but because it is so unbending,—because it will not suit itself to times and emergencies, and to the private and occasional likings and tastes of individuals. This is the kind of religion which St. Paul virtually warns us against, as often as he speaks of the Gospel as really being a law and a servitude. He indeed glories in its being such ; for, as the happiness of all creatures lies in their performing their parts well, where God has placed them, so man's greatest good lies in obedience to God's law and an imitation of God's perfections. But he knew that the world would not think so, and therefore he insists on it. Therefore it is that he insists on the necessity of the Christian's "*fulfilling* the righteousness of the law ;" fulfilling it, because till we aim at complete, unreserved obedience in all things, we are not really Christians at all. Hence St. James says, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And our Saviour assures us that "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven ;" and that "Except our

righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees," which was thus partial and circumscribed, "we shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And when the young man came to Him, saying that he had kept all the commandments, and asking what he lacked, he pointed out the "one thing" wanting in him; and when he would not complete his obedience by that one thing, but went away sorrowful, then, as if all his obedience in other points availed him nothing, Christ added, "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!"* Let us not then deceive ourselves; what God demands of us is to fulfil his law, or at least to aim at fulfilling it; to be content with nothing short of perfect obedience,—to attempt every thing,—to avail ourselves of the aids given us, and throw ourselves, not first, but afterwards, on God's mercy for our shortcomings. This is, I know, at first hearing a startling doctrine; and so averse are our hearts to it, that some men even attempt to maintain that it is an unchristian doctrine. A forlorn expedient indeed, with the Bible to refer to, and its statements about the strait gate and the narrow way. But this men would fain maintain, if they could; they argue that all enforcement of religion as a service or duty is erroneous, or what they call legal, and that no observance is right but what proceeds from impulse, or what they call the heart. They would fain prove that the law is not binding on us, because Christ has fulfilled it, or because faith is accepted instead of obedience in those who are becoming religious, and have not had time to begin fulfilling it.

Such persons appeal to Scripture, and they must be refuted, as is not difficult, from Scripture; but the multitude of men do not take so much trouble about the matter. Instead of even professing to discover what God has said, they take what they call a common-sense view of it. They maintain it is impossible that religion should really be so strict in God's design. They condemn the notion as over-strained and morose. They profess to admire and take pleasure in religion as a whole, but think that it should not be needlessly pressed in details, or, as they express it, carried too far. They complain only of its particularity, if I may use the term, or its want of indulgence and consideration in little things; that is, in other words, they like religion before they have experience of it, in prospect, at a distance, till they have to be religious. They like to talk of it, they like to see men religious; they think it commendable and highly important; but directly religion comes home to them in real particulars of whatever kind, they like it not. It suffices them to have seen and praised it; they feel it a burden whenever

* Rom. viii. 1—4. James ii. 10. Matt. v. 19, 20. Mark x. 21. 24.

they feel it at all, whenever it calls upon them to do what otherwise they would not do. In a word, the state of the multitude of men is this,—their hearts are going a different way; and their real quarrel with religion, if they know themselves, is not that it is strict, or engrossing, or imperative, not that it goes too far, but that it *is* religion. It is religion itself which we all by nature dislike, not the excess merely. Nature tends towards the earth, and God is in heaven. If I want to travel north, and all the roads are cut to the east, of course I shall complain of the roads. I shall find nothing but obstacles; I shall have to surmount walls, and cross rivers, and go round about, and after all fail of my end. Such is the conduct of those who are not bold enough to give up a profession of religion, yet wish to serve the world. They try to reach Babylon by roads which run to Mount Sion. Do you not see that they necessarily must meet with thwartings, crossings, disappointments, and failure? They go mile after mile, watching in vain for the turrets of the city of Vanity, because they are on the wrong road; and, unwilling to own what they are really seeking, they find fault with the road as circuitous and wearisome. They accuse religion of interfering with what they consider their innocent pleasures and wishes. But religion is a bondage only to those who have not the heart to like it, who are not cast into its mould. Accordingly in the verse before the text St. Paul thanks God that his brethren had “obeyed from the *heart* that *form* of teaching, into which they had been delivered.” We Christians are cast into a certain mould. So far as we keep within it, we are not sensible that it is a mould, or has an outline. It is when our hearts would overflow in some evil direction, then we discover that we are confined, and consider ourselves in prison. It is the law in our members warring against the law of the Spirit which brings us into a distressing bondage. Let us then see where we stand, and what we must do. Heaven cannot change; God is “without variableness or shadow of turning.” His “word endureth for ever in heaven.” His law is from everlasting to everlasting. *We* must change. We must go over to the side of heaven. Never had a soul true happiness but in conformity to God, in obedience to His will. We must become what we are not; we must learn to love what we do not love, and practise ourselves in what is difficult. We must have the law of the Spirit of life written and set up in our hearts, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, and that we may learn to please and to love God.

Lastly, as some men defend their want of strictness on what they consider the authority of Scripture, and others, that is the majority, try to persuade themselves that religion cannot really be strict, whatever strong expressions or statements may be found in Scripture, some per-

sons there are who take a more candid, but a more daring course. Instead of making excuses, such as I have been considering, they frankly admit the fact, and then go on to urge it as a valid argument against religion altogether. Instead of professing to like religion, *all but* its service, they boldly object that religion is altogether unnatural, and therefore cannot be incumbent on us. They say that it is very well for its ministers and teachers to set up a high doctrine, but that men are men, and the world is the world, and that life was not meant to be a burden, and that God sent us here for enjoyment, and that He will never punish us hereafter for following the law of our nature. I answer, doubtless this life was meant to be enjoyment ; but why not a rejoicing in the Lord ? We were meant to follow the law of our nature ; but why of our old nature, why not of our new ? Were we indeed in the state of our first nature, under the guilt and defilement of our birth-sin, then this argument might be urged speciously, though not conclusively of course then ; but how does it apply to Christians ? Now that God has opened the doors of our prison-house, and brought us into the kingdom of His Son, if men are still carnal men, and the world a sinful world, and the life of Angels a burden, and the law of our nature not the law of God, whose fault is it ?

We Christians are indeed under the law as other men, but, as I have already said, it is the new law, the law of the Spirit of Christ. We are under grace. That law, which to nature is a grievous bondage, is to those who live under the power of God's presence, what it was meant to be, a rejoicing. When then we feel reluctant to serve God, when thoughts rise within us as if He were a hard Master, and that His promises are not attractive enough to balance the strictness of His commandments, let us recollect that we, as being Christians, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and let us act upon the conviction of it. Let us seek His face. Let us come where He gives grace. Let us come to the ordinances of grace, in which Christ gives His Holy Spirit to enable us to do that which by nature we cannot do, and to be "the servants of righteousness." They who pray for His saving help to change their likings and dislikings, their tastes, their views, their wills, their hearts, do not indeed all at once gain what they seek ;—they do not gain it at once asking ;—they do not *perceive* they gain it while they gain it,—but if they come continually day by day to Him,—if they come humbly,—if they come in faith,—if they come not as a trial how they shall like God's service, but throwing (as far as may be) their whole hearts and souls into their duty as a sacrifice to Him,—if they come, not seeking a sign, but determined to go on seeking Him, honouring Him, serving Him, trusting Him, whether they see light, or feel

comfort, or discern their growth, or no,—such men *will* gain, though they know it not; they will find, even while they are still seeking; before they call, He will answer them, and they will in the end find themselves saved wondrously, to their surprise, how they know not, and when their crown seemed at a distance. “They that wait on the Lord,” says the Prophet, “shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”*

S E R M O N II.

OBEDIENCE WITHOUT LOVE, AS INSTANCED IN THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.

NUMBERS xxii. 38.

The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak.

WHEN we consider the Old Testament as written by divine inspiration, and preserved, beyond the time of its own Dispensation, for us Christians,—as acknowledged and delivered over to us by Christ Himself, and pronounced by St. Paul to be “profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness,”†—we ought not surely to read any portion of it with indifference, nay without great and anxious interest. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”—is the sort of inquiry which spontaneously arises in the serious mind. Christ and His Apostle cannot have put the Law and the Prophets into our hands for nothing. I would this thought were more carefully weighed than it commonly is. We profess indeed to revere the Old Testament; yet, for some reason or other, at least one considerable part of it, the historical, is regarded by the mass, even of men who think about religion, as merely historical, as a relation of facts, as antiquities; not in its divine characters, not

* Isaiah xl. 31.

† 2 Tim. iii. 16.

in its practical bearings, not in reference to themselves. The notion that God speaks in it to them personally, the question, "*What does He say?*" "*What must I do?*" does not occur to them. They consider the Old Testament concerns them only as far as it can be made typical of one or two of the great Christian doctrines; they do not consider that in its fulness, and in its literal sense, as a collection of profound moral lessons, such as are not vouchsafed in the New, though St. Paul expressly says that it is "profitable for instruction in righteousness."

If the Old Testament history generally be intended as a permanent instruction to the Church, much more, one would think, must such prominent and remarkable passages in it as the history of Balaam. Yet I suspect a very great number of readers carry off little more from it than the impression of the miracle which occurs in it, the speaking of his ass. And not unfrequently they talk more lightly on the subject than is expedient. Yet I think some very solemn and startling lessons may be drawn from the history, some of which I shall now attempt to set before you.

What is it which the chapters in question present to us? The first and most general account of Balaam would be this;—that he was a very eminent person in his age and country, that he was courted and gained by the enemies of Israel, and that he promoted a wicked cause in a very wicked way; that when he could do nothing else for it, he counselled his employers to employ their women as means of seducing the chosen people into idolatry; and that he fell in battle in the war which ensued. These are the chief points, the prominent features of his history, as viewed at a distance;—and repulsive indeed they are. He took on him the office of a tempter, which is especially the Devil's office. But Satan himself does not seem so hateful near as at a distance; and when we look into Balaam's history closely, we shall find points of character which may well interest those who do not consider his beginning and his end. Let us then approach him more nearly, and forget for a moment the summary account of him, which I have just been giving.

Now first he was blessed with God's especial favour. You will ask at once, How could so bad a man be in God's favour? but I wish you to put aside reasonings, and contemplate facts. I say he was especially favoured by God; God has a store of favours in His treasure-house, and of various kinds,—some for a time, some for ever,—some implying His approbation, others not. He showers favours even on the bad. He makes His sun to rise on the unjust as well as on the just. He willeth not the death of a sinner. He is said to have loved the young ruler, whose heart, notwithstanding, was upon the world. His loving-mercy

extends over all his works. How He separates in His own divine thought, kindness from approbation, time from eternity, what He does from what he foresees, we know not, and need not inquire. At present He is loving to all men, as if he did not foresee that some are to be saints, others reprobates to all eternity. He dispenses His favours variously,—gifts, graces, rewards, faculties, circumstances being indefinitely diversified, nor admitting of discrimination or numbering on our part. Balaam, I say, was in His favour ; not indeed for his holiness sake, not for ever ; but in a certain sense, according to His inscrutable purpose, who chooses whom He will choose, and exalts whom He will exalt, without destroying man's secret responsibilities or His own governance, and the triumph of truth and holiness and His own strict impartiality in the end. Balaam was favoured in an especial way above the mere heathen. Not only had he the grant of inspiration, and the knowledge of God's will, an insight into the truths of morality, clear and enlarged, such as we Christians even cannot surpass ; but he was even admitted to conscious intercourse with God, such as even Christians have not. In our Sunday Services, you may recollect, we read the chapters which relate to this intercourse ; and we do not read those which record the darker passages of his history. Now, do you not think that most persons, who know only so much of him as our Sunday lessons contain, form a very mild judgment about him ? They see him indeed to be on the wrong side, but still view him as prophet of God. Such a judgment is not incorrect as far as it goes ; and I appeal to it, if it be what I think it is, as a testimony how highly Balaam was in God's favour.

But again, Balaam was in the ordinary and commonly received sense of the word, without straining its meaning at all, a very *conscientious* man. That this is so, will be plain from some parts of his conduct and some speeches of his, of which I proceed to remind you ; and which will show also his enlightened and admirable view of moral and religious obligation. When Balak sent to him to call him to curse Israel, he did not make up his mind for himself, as many a man might do, or according to the suggestions of avarice and ambition. No, he brought the matter before God in prayer. He *prayed* before he did what he did, as a religious man ought to do. Next, when God forbade his going, he at once, as he ought, positively refused to go. "Get you into your land," he said, "for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you." Balak sent again a more pressing message and more lucrative offers, and Balaam was even more decided than before. "If Balak," he said, "would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more."^a

Afterwards God gave him leave to go. "If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them."* Then, and not till then, he went.

Almighty God added, "Yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." Now, in the next place, observe how strictly he obeyed this command. When he first met Balak, he said, in the words of the text, "Lo, I am come unto thee ; have I now any power at all to say any thing ? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak." Again, when he was about to prophesy, he said, "Whatsoever He showeth me I will tell thee ;"† and he did so, in spite of Balak's disappointment and mortification to hear him bless Israel. When Balak showed his impatience, he only replied calmly, "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth ?" Again he prophesied, and again it was a blessing ; again Balak was angered, and again the prophet firmly and serenely answered, "Told not I thee, saying, All that the Lord speaketh, that I must do ?" A third time he prophesied blessing ; and now Balak's anger was kindled, and he smote his hands together, and bade him depart to his place. But Balaam was not moved thereby from his duty. "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death."‡ Balak might have instantly revenged himself upon the prophet ; but Balaam, not satisfied with blessing Israel, proceeded, as a prophet should, to deliver himself of what remained of the prophetic burden, by foretelling more pointedly than before, destruction to Moab and the other enemies of the chosen people. He prefaced his prophecy with these unacceptable words,—“Spake I not also unto thy messengers which thou sentest unto me, saying, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord, to do either good or bad of mine own mind ? but what the Lord saith, that will I speak. And now behold, I go unto my people ; come, therefore, and I will advertise thee what this people shall do to thy people in the latter days.” After delivering his conscience, he “rose up, and went, and returned to his place.”

All this surely expresses the conduct and the feelings of a high-principled, honourable, conscientious man. Balaam, I say, was certainly such, in that very sense in which we commonly use those words. He said, and he did ; he professed, and he acted according to his professions. There is no inconsistency in word and deed. He obeys as well as talks about religion ; and, this being the case, we shall feel more intimately the value of the following noble sentiments which he lets drop from time to time, and which, if he had shown less firmness in his conduct, might have passed for mere words, the words of a maker of

* Numb. xxii. † Numb. xxiii. ‡ Prov. xvi. 14.

speeches, a sophist, moralist, or orator. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." "God is not a man that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. . . . Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." "I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh." It is remarkable that these declarations are great and lofty in their mode of expression; and the saying of his recorded by the prophet Micah is of the same kind. Balak asked what *sacrifices* were acceptable to God. Balaam answered, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"*

Viewing then the inspired notices concerning Balaam in all their parts, we cannot deny to him the praise which, if those notices have a plain meaning, they certainly do convey, that he was an honourable and religious man, with a great deal of what was great and noble about him; a man any one of us at first sight would have trusted, sought out in our difficulties, perhaps made the head of a party, and any how spoken of with great respect. We may indeed, if we please, say that he fell away afterwards from all this excellence; though, after all, there is something shocking in such a notion. Nay, it is not in nature even that ordinarily honourable men should suddenly change; but, however, this *may* be said,—it may be said he fell away; but, I presume, it *cannot* be said that he was other than a high-principled man (in the language of the world) *when* he so spoke and acted.

But now the strange thing is, that at this very time, *while* he so spoke and acted, he seems, as in one sense to be in God's favour, so in another and higher to be under His displeasure. If this be so, the supposition that he fell away will not be in point; the difficulty it proposes to solve will remain; for it will turn out that he was displeasing to God *amid* his many excellences. The passage I have in mind is this, as you will easily suppose. "God's anger was kindled, because he went" with the princes of Moab, "and the Angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him." Afterwards, when God opened his eyes, "he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand" . . . "And Balaam said, I have *sinned*, for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again." You observe Balaam said, "I have sinned," *though* he avers he did not *know* that God was his adversary. What makes the whole transaction the more strange is

* Mich. vi. 8.

this,—that Almighty God had said before, “If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them;” and that when Balaam offered to go back again, the Angel repeated, “Go with the men.” And afterwards we find in the midst of his heathen enchantments “God met Balaam,” and “put a word in his mouth;” and afterwards “the Spirit of God came upon him.”

Summing up then what has been said, we seem, in Balaam’s history, to have the following remarkable case, that is, remarkable according to our customary judgment of things: a man divinely favoured, visited, influenced, guided, protected, eminently honoured, illuminated,—a man possessed of an enlightened sense of duty, and of moral and religious acquirements, educated, high-minded, conscientious, honourable, firm; and yet on the side of God’s enemies, personally under God’s displeasure, and in the end (if we go on to that) the direct instrument of Satan, and having his portion with the unbelievers. I do not think I have materially overstated any part of this description; but if it be correct only in substance, it certainly is most fearful, after allowing for incidental exaggeration,—most fearful to every one of us, the more fearful the more we are conscious to ourselves in the main of purity of intention in what we do, and conscientious adherence to our sense of duty.

And now it is natural to ask, what is the *meaning* of this startling exhibition of God’s ways? Is it really possible that a conscientious and religious man should be found among the enemies of God, nay, should be personally displeasing to Him, and that at the very time God was visiting him with extraordinary favour? What a mystery is this! Surely, if this be so, revelation has added to our perplexities, not relieved them! What instruction, what profit, what correction, what doctrine is there in such portions of inspired Scripture?

In answering this difficulty, I observe, in the first place, that it certainly is impossible, quite impossible, that a really conscientious man should be displeasing to God; at the same time it is possible to be *generally* conscientious, or what the world calls honourable and high-principled, yet to be destitute of that religious fear and strictness, which God calls conscientiousness, but which the world calls superstition or narrowness of mind. And bearing this in mind, we shall, perhaps, have a solution of our perplexities concerning Balaam.

And here I would make a remark; that, when a passage of Scripture, descriptive of God’s dealings with man, is obscure or perplexing, it is as well to ask ourselves whether this may not be owing to some insensibility in ourselves or in the age, to certain peculiarities of the Divine law or government therein involved. Thus, to those who do not understand the nature and history of religious truth, our Lord’s asser-

tion about sending a sword on earth is an obscurity. To those who consider sin a light evil, the doctrine of eternal punishment is a difficulty. In like manner the history of the flood, of the call of Abraham, of the plagues of Egypt, of the wandering in the desert, of the judgment on Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and a multitude of other occurrences, may be inseparable difficulties, except to certain states and tempers of mind, to which, on the contrary, they will seem quite natural and obvious. I consider that the history of Balaam is a striking illustration of this remark. Those whose hearts, like Josiah, are "tender," scrupulous, sensitive in religious matters, will see with clearness and certainty what the real state of the case was as regards him; on the other hand, our difficulties about it, if we have them, are a presumption that the age we live in has not the key to a certain class of Divine providences, is deficient in a certain class of religious principles, ideas, and sensibilities. Let it be considered then whether the following remarks may not tend to lessen our perplexity.

Balaam obeyed God from a sense of its being *right* to do so, but not from a *desire to please Him*, from *fear and love*. He had other ends, aims, wishes of his own, distinct from God's will and purpose, and he would have effected these if he could. His endeavour was, not to please God, but to please self without displeasing God; to pursue his own ends *as far* as was consistent with his duty. In a word, he did not give his heart to God, but obeyed Him, as a man may obey human law, or observe the usages of society or his country, as something external to himself, because he knows he ought to do so, from a sort of rational good sense, a conviction of its propriety, expediency, or comfort, as the case may be.

You will observe he *wished* to go with Balak's messengers, only he felt he *ought not* to go; and the problem which he attempted to solve was *how* to go and yet not offend God. He was quite resolved he *would* any how act religiously and conscientiously; he was too honourable a man to break any of his engagements; if he had given his word, it was sacred; if he had duties, they were imperative: he had a character to maintain, and an inward sense of propriety to satisfy; but he would have given the world to have got rid of his duties; and the question was, *how* to do so without violence; and he did not care about walking on the very brink of transgression, so that he could keep from falling over. Accordingly he was not content with *ascertaining* God's will, but he attempted to *change* it. He inquired of Him a *second time*, and this was to tempt Him. Hence, while God bade him go, His anger was kindled against him because he went.

This surely is no uncommon character, rather it is the common case

even with the more respectable and praiseworthy portion of the community. I say plainly, and without fear of contradiction, though it is a serious thing to say, that the aim of most men esteemed conscientious and religious, or who are what is called honourable, upright men, is, to all appearance, not how to please God, but how to please themselves without displeasing Him. I say confidently, that is, if we may judge of men in general by what we see, that they make this world the first object in their minds, and use religion as a corrective, a restraint, upon *too much* attachment to the world. They think that religion is a negative thing,—a sort of moderate love of the world, a moderate luxury, a moderate avarice, a moderate ambition, and a moderate selfishness. You see this in numberless ways. You see it in the course of trade, of public life, of literature, in all matters where men have objects to pursue. Nay you see it in religious exertions; of which it too commonly happens that the chief aim is, to attain *any how* a certain definite end, religious indeed, but of man's own choosing; not to please God, and *next*, if possible, to attain it; not to attain it religiously, or not at all.

This surely is so plain that it is scarcely necessary to enlarge upon it. Men do not take for the object towards which they act, God's will, but certain maxims, rules, or measures, right perhaps as far as they go, but defective because they admit of being subjected to certain other ultimate ends, which are not religious. Men are just, honest, upright, trustworthy, but all this not from the love and fear of God, but from a mere feeling of obligation to be so, and in subjection to certain worldly objects. And thus they are what is popularly called moral, without being religious. Such was Balaam. He was in a popular sense a strictly moral, honourable, conscientious man; that he was not so in a heavenly and true sense is plain, if not from the considerations here insisted on, at least from his after history, which (we may presume) brought to light his secret defect, in whatever it consisted.

And here we see why he spoke so much and so vauntingly of his determination to follow God's direction. He made a great *point* of following it; his end was, not to please God, but to keep straight with him. He who loves does not act from calculation or reasoning; he does not in his cool moments reflect upon or talk of what he is doing, as if it were a great sacrifice. Much less does he pride himself on it; but this is what Balaam seems to have done.

I have been observing that his defect lay in this, that he had not a single eye towards God's will, but was ruled by other objects. But moreover, this evil heart of unbelief showed itself in a peculiar way, to which it is necessary to draw your attention, and to which I alluded

just now in saying that the difficulties of Scripture often arose from the defective moral condition of our hearts.

Why did Almighty God give Balaam leave to go to Balak, and then was angry with him for going? I suppose for this reason, because his asking twice was tempting God. God is a jealous God. Sinners as we are, nay as creatures of His hands, we may not safely intrude upon Him, and make free with Him. We may not dare do that, which we should not dare to do with an earthly superior, which we should be punished, for instance, for attempting, in the case of a king or noble of this world. To rush into His presence, to address Him familiarly, to urge Him, to strive to make our duty lie in one direction when it lies in another, to handle rudely and practise upon His holy word, to trifle with truth, to treat conscience lightly, to take liberties (as it may be called) with any thing that is God's, all irreverence, profaneness, unscrupulousness, wantonness, is represented in Scripture not only as a sin, but as felt, noticed, quickly returned on God's part, (if I may dare use such human words of the Almighty and All-holy God, without transgressing the rule I am myself laying down,—but He vouchsafes in Scripture to represent Himself to us in that only way in which we can attain to the knowledge of Him,) I say all irreverence towards God is represented as being jealously and instantly and fearfully noticed and visited, as friend or stranger among men might resent an insult shown him. This should be carefully considered; we are apt to act towards God and the things of God as towards a mere system, a law, a name, a religion, a principle, not as against a Person—a living, watchful, present, prompt and powerful eye and arm. That all this is a great error, is plain to all who study Scripture, as is sufficiently shown by the death of 50,070 persons for looking into the ark—the death of the Prophet by the lion, who was sent to Jeroboam from Judah, and did not minutely obey his instructions—the slaughter of the children at Bethel by the bears, for mocking Elisha—the exclusion of Moses from the promised land, for smiting the rock twice—and the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira. Now Balaam's fault seems to have been of this nature. God told him distinctly not to go to Balak. He was rash enough to ask a second time, and God as a punishment gave him leave to ally himself with His enemies, and to take part against His people. With this presumptuousness and love of self in his innermost heart, his prudence, firmness, wisdom, illumination, and general conscientiousness, availed him nothing.

A number of reflections crowd upon the mind on the review of this awful history, as I may well call it; with a brief notice of some of these I shall conclude.

1. First, we see how little we can depend, in judging of right and

wrong, on the apparent excellence and high character of individuals. There is a right and a wrong in matters of conduct, in spite of the world; but it is the world's aim and Satan's aim to take our minds off from the indelible distinctions of things, and to fix our thoughts upon man, to make us the slaves of man, to make us dependent on his opinion, his patronage, his honour, his smiles and his frowns. But if Scripture is to be our guide, it is quite plain that the most conscientious, religious, high-principled, honourable men, (I use the words in their ordinary, not in their Scripture sense,) may be on the side of evil, may be Satan's instruments in cursing, if that were possible, and at least in seducing and enfeebling the people of God. For in the world's judgment, even when most refined, a person is conscientious and consistent; who acts up to his standard, *whatever that is*, not he only who aims at taking the highest standard. This is the world's highest flight; in its ordinary judgment he is conscientious and consistent, who is only inconsistent and goes against conscience in any extremity, when hardly beset, and when he must cut the knot or remain in present difficulties. That is, *he* is thought to obey conscience, who only disobeys it when it is a praise and merit to obey it. This, alas! is the way with some of the most honourable of mere men of the world, nay of the mass of (so called) respectable men. They never tell untruths, or break their word, or profane the Lord's day, or are dishonest in trade, or falsify their principles, or insult religion, except in very great straits or great emergencies, when driven into a corner; and then perhaps they force themselves, as Saul did when he offered sacrifice instead of Samuel;—they force themselves, and (as it were) undergo their sin as a sort of unpleasant self-denial or penance, being ashamed of it all the while, getting it over as quick as they can, shutting their eyes and leaping blindfold, and then forgetting it, as something which is bitter to think about. And if memory is ever roused and annoys them, they console themselves that after all they have only gone against their conscience now and then. This is their view of themselves and of each other, taken at the greatest advantage; and if any one come across them who has lived more out of the world than themselves, and has a truer sense of right and wrong, and who fastens on some one point in them, which to his mind is a token and warning to himself against them, such a one seems of course narrow-minded and overstrict in his notions. For instance; supposing some such man had fallen in with Balaam, and had been privy to the history of his tempting God, it is clear that Balaam's general correctness, his nobleness of demeanour, and his enlightened view of duty, would not have availed one jot or tittle to overcome such a man's repugnance to him. He would have been

startled and alarmed, and would have kept at a distance, and in consequence he would have been called by the world uncharitable and bigotted.

2. A second reflection which rises in the mind has relation to the wonderful secret providence of God, while all things seem to go on in a worldly way. Balaam did not see the Angel, yet the Angel went out against him as an adversary. He had no open denunciation of God's wrath urged against him. He had sinned, and nothing happened outwardly, but wrath was abroad and in his path. *This* again is a very serious and awful thought. God's arm is not shortened. What happened to Balaam is as if it took place yesterday. God is what He ever was; we sin as man has ever sinned. We sin without being aware of it. God is our enemy without our being aware of it; and when the blow falls, we turn our thoughts to the creature, we ill-treat our ass, we lay the blame on circumstances of this world, instead of turning to Him. "Lord, when Thy hand is lifted up, they will not see; but they shall see," in the next world if not here, "and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea the fire of Thine enemies shall devour them."*

3. Here too is a serious reflection, if we had time to pursue it, that when we have begun an evil course, we cannot retrace our steps. Balaam was forced to go with the men; he offered to draw back—he was not allowed—yet God's wrath followed him. This is what comes of committing ourselves to an evil line of conduct; and we see daily instances of it in the experience of life. Men get entangled, and are bound hand and foot in dangerous courses. They make imprudent marriages or connexions; they place themselves in dangerous situations; they engage in unprofitable or harmful undertakings. Too often indeed they do not discern their evil plight; but when they do, they cannot draw back. God seems to say, "Go with the men." They are in bondage, and they must make the best of it; being the slave of the creature without ceasing to be the responsible servants of God; under His displeasure, yet bound to act as if they could please Him. All this is very fearful.

4. Lastly, I will but say this in addition,—God gives us warnings now and then, but does not repeat them. Balaam's sin consisted in not acting upon what was told him *once for all*. In like manner, you, my brethren, now hear what you may never hear again, and what perchance in its substance is the word of God. You may never hear it again, though with your outward ears you hear it a hundred times, be-

* Isaiah xxvi. 11.

cause you may be impressed with it now, but never may again. You may be impressed with it now, and the impression may die away ; and some time hence, if you ever think about it, you may then speak of it thus,—that the view struck you at the time, but somehow the more you thought about it, the less you liked or valued it. True ; this *may* be so, and it *may* arise, as you think, from the doctrine I have been setting before you not being true and scriptural ; but it *may* also arise from your having heard God's voice and not obeyed it. It may be that you have become blind, not the doctrine been disproved. Beware of trifling with your conscience. It is often said that second thoughts are best ; so they are in matters of judgment, but not in matters of conscience. In matters of duty, first thoughts are commonly best ; they have more in them of the voice of God. May He give you grace so to hear what has been said, as you will wish to have heard, when life is over ; to hear in a practical way, with a desire to profit by it, to learn God's will, and to do it !

SERMON III.

MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF SINGLE SINS.

NUMBERS xxxii. 23.

Be sure your sin will find you out.

THIS is one of those passages in the inspired writings, which, though introduced on a particular occasion and with a limited meaning, express a general truth, such as we seem at once to feel as being far greater than the particular context in which they occur, and which we use apart from it. Moses warned the Reubenites and Gadites, that, if they, who had already been allotted their inheritance, did not assist their brethren in gaining theirs, their sin would find them out, or be visited on them. And, while he so spoke, He who spoke through him, God the Holy Spirit, conveyed, as we believe, a deeper meaning under his words, for the edification of His Church to the end ; viz., He intimated

that great law of God's governance, to which all who study that governance will bear witness, that sin is ever followed by punishment. Day and night follow each other not more surely, than punishment comes upon sin. Whether the sin be great or little, momentary or habitual, wilful or through infirmity, its own peculiar punishment seems according to the law of nature, to follow, as far as our experience of that law carries us, sooner or later, lighter or heavier, as the case may be.

We Christians indeed are under a dispensation of grace, and are blessed with a certain suspension of this awful law of natural religion. The blood of Christ, as St. John says, is of such wonderful efficacy as to "cleanse us from all sin;" to interpose between our sin and its punishment, and to wipe out the former before the latter has overtaken us. This inestimable benefit is applied to our souls in various ways, according to God's inscrutable pleasure; and so far as this is the case, it supersedes or reverses the law of nature which has annexed suffering to disobedience. But, however effectually and extensively it is applied, still experience assures us that it is not yet vouchsafed to us in full measure and under all circumstances. It is an undeniable fact, that penitents, however truly so, are not secured from the present consequences of their past offences, whether outward or inward, in mind, body, or estate. And we know that it is possible for Christians to fall away and not repent. Nay, we have reason for saying that those who sin after grace given, are in a worse state than if they had not received it. Great, then, as are our privileges under the Gospel, they in no degree supersede the force and the serious warning of the words in the text. Still it is true, and in many frightful ways, nay more so even than before Christ died, that our sin finds us out, and brings punishment after it, in due course; just as a stone falls to the earth, or as fire burns, or as poison kills, as if by the necessary bond of cause and effect.

The text leads us to consider the consequences of a single sin, such as a breach of their engagement would have been in the Reubenites and Gadites; and, to narrow the subject, I shall speak only of the moral consequences. Let us then consider the influence which single sins, past or present, may have on our present moral character in God's sight; how great it may be, will be plain from such reflections as the following:—

And first of all, it is natural to reflect on the probable influence upon us of sins committed in our childhood, and even infancy, which we never realized or have altogether forgotten. Ignorant as we are when children begin to be responsible beings, yet we are ignorant also when they are not so; nor can we assign a date ever so early when they cer-

tainly are not. And even the latest assignable date is very early ; and thenceforward, whatever they do, exerts, we cannot doubt, a most momentous influence on their character. We know that two lines starting at a small angle, diverge to greater and greater distances, the further they are produced ; and surely in like manner a soul living on into eternity may be infinitely changed for the better or the worse by very slight influences exerted on it in the beginning of its course. A very slight deviation at setting out may be the measure of the difference between tending to hell and tending to heaven.

To give due weight to this thought, we should recollect that children's minds are impressible in a very singular way, such as does not happen afterwards. The passing occurrences which meet them, these whether from their novelty or other cause, rest upon their imagination, as if they had duration ; and days or hours, having to them the semblance, may do the work of years. Any one, on casting his thoughts back on his first years, may convince himself of this ; the character, which his childhood bears in his memory as a whole, being traceable to a few external circumstances, which lasted through a very small portion of it, a certain abode, or a visit to some particular place, or the presence of certain persons, or some one spring or summer,—circumstances which he at first cannot believe to have been so transitory as on examination he finds they certainly were.

On the other hand, let it be observed, that we are certainly ignorant of a great deal that goes on in us in infancy and childhood ; I mean our illnesses and sufferings as children, which we are either not conscious of at the time, or at any rate forget soon afterwards ; which yet are of a very serious nature, and while they must have a moral cause, known or unknown, must, one would think, have a moral effect also ; and while they suggest by their occurrence the possibility of other serious things going on in us also, have moreover a natural tendency to affect us in some way or other. Mysterious as it is that infants and children should suffer pain, surely it is not less so that, when they come to years of reason, they should so forget it, as hardly to be able to believe, when told of it, that they themselves were the very sufferers ; yet as sickness and accidents then happening permanently affect their body, though they recollect nothing of them, there is no extravagance in the idea that passing sins then contracted and forgotten for ever afterwards, should so affect the soul as to cause those moral differences between man and man which, however originating, are too clear to be denied. And with this fearful thought before us of the responsibility attaching to the first years of our life, how miserable is it to reflect on the other hand that children are commonly treated as if they were not responsi-

ble, as if it did not matter what they did or were ! They are indulged, humoured, spoiled, or at best neglected. Bad examples are set them ; things are done or said before them, which they understand and catch up, when others least think it, store in their minds, or act upon ; and thus the indelible hues of sin and error are imprinted on their souls, and become as really part of their nature as that original sin in which they were born.

And what is true in infancy and childhood, is in its degree true in after life. Though our earliest years have especially the characteristic of being impressible by outward things, and of being unconscious or forgetful of them, yet at particular seasons afterwards, when the mind is excited, thrown out of its ordinary state, thrown for a while out of its subjection to habit, as if into that original unformed state when it was more free to choose good and evil, then in like manner it takes impressions, and those indelible ones, and withal almost unconsciously, after the manner of childhood. This is one reason why a time of trial is often such a crisis in a man's spiritual history. It is a season when the iron is heated and is malleable ; one or two strokes serve to fashion it as a weapon for God or for Satan. Or in other words, if a man is taken at unawares, an apparently small sin leads to consequences in years and ages to come so fearful, that one can hardly dare contemplate them. This may serve to make us understand the shortness and apparent simplicity of the trial which is sometimes represented in Scripture as sealing the fate of those who succumb to it ; Saul's trial, for instance, or Esau's ; as on the other hand, indefinitely great results may follow from one act of obedience, as Joseph's in resisting his master's wife, or David in sparing the life of Saul. Such great occasions, good or evil, occur all through life, but especially in youth ; and it were well if young persons would realize that they do occur and are momentous. Alas ! what would they give afterwards, when they come to repent, or at that most awful season, the future judgment, when they stand before God, and are shortly to enter heaven or hell, not to have done what in a moment of excitement they did—to recall the blasphemous avowal, or the guilty deed—to be what they then were and now are not, free to serve God, free from the brand and the yoke of Satan ! How will they bitterly bewail that fascination, or delirium, or sophistry, which made them what they need not have been, had they used against it the arms which Christ gave them !

But to return : to these single or forgotten sins such as I have described them, are not improbably to be traced the strange inconsistencies of character which we often witness in the experience of life. I mean, you meet continually with men possessed of a number of good points,

amiable and excellent men, yet in one respect perhaps strangely perverted. And you cannot move them, or succeed at all with them, but must leave them as you find them. Perhaps they are weak and over-indulgent towards others, perhaps they are harsh, perhaps they are obstinate, perhaps they are perversely wedded to some wrong opinion, perhaps they are irresolute and undecided,—some fault or other they have, and you lament it, but cannot mend it, and are obliged to take them for what they are, and be resigned, however you may regret. Men are sometimes so good and so great, that one is led to exclaim, Oh that they were only a little better, and a little greater !

This indeed is all the difference between being a true saint of God, and a second rate or third rate Christian. Few men are great saints. There is always a something ; I am not speaking of wilful or admitted sins—sins against the conscience, (they of course exclude a man altogether from any hope,) but of a defect of view and principle, a perversion of character. This is the common case even with the better sort of Christians ; they are deformed in stature, they are not upright, they do not walk perfectly with God. And you cannot tell why it is ;—they have ever lived religiously,—they have been removed from temptation, had good training and instruction, and they fulfil their calling, are good husbands or wives, good parents, good neighbours,—still when you come to know them well, there is in them this or that great inconsistency.

This consideration moreover tends to account for the strange way in which defects of character are buried in a man. He goes on, for years perhaps, and no one ever discovers his particular failings, nor does he know them himself ; till at length he is brought into certain circumstances, which bring them out. Hence men turn out so very differently from what was expected ; and we are seldom able to tell beforehand of another, and scarcely ever dare we promise of ourselves as to the future. The proverb, for instance, says, power tries a man ; so do riches, so do, various changes of life. We find that after all we do not know him—though we have been acquainted with him for years. We are disappointed, nay sometimes startled, as if he had almost lost his identity ; whereas perchance it is but the coming to light of sins committed long before we knew him.

Again : single sins indulged or neglected are often the cause of other defects of character, which seem to have no connection with them, but which after all are rather symptomatic of the former, than themselves at the bottom of the mischief. This is generally acknowledged as regards a skeptical temper of mind, which commonly is assailed by argument in vain, the root of the evil lying deeper, viz. in habits of vice, which at the same time the guilty parties strenuously maintain to be

quite a distinct matter, to relate to their conduct, and to have no influence whatever upon their reason or their opinions. And the same thing perhaps holds true in other cases ; softness of mind and manner and false refinement may sometimes be the result of allowing ourselves in impure thoughts ; or wanderings in prayer may have some subtle connection with self-conceit ; and passionateness may owe its power over us to indulgence, though without excess, in eating and drinking. I am not connecting these several sins together as if what are called causes and effects, but stating what perchance is sometimes true in matter of fact, however we account for it.

Now I will proceed to consider the existence of single sins, and the state of persons labouring under them, in another point of view. I suppose there are few persons indeed, if any, but have some besetting sin or other, some infirmity, some temptation ; and in resisting this lies their trial. Now a man may be very religious *all but* this one infirmity, and this one indulged infirmity may in consequence be producing most distressing effects on his spiritual state both in itself and in God's sight, without his being aware of it. Suppose, for instance, that a man is naturally resentful and unforgiving. He may, in spite of this, have a great number of excellences, very high views, very deeply seated principles, very great points, great self-devotion to God's service, great faith, great sanctity. I can fancy such a person almost arguing himself out of his own conviction, that he is fostering the secret sin in question, from his consciousness of his own integrity, and his devotional spirit in the general round of his duties. There are sins which, when committed, so acutely distress the mind, that they are far less dangerous to it than their intrinsic heinousness would otherwise make them. Never must we undervalue of course the extreme misery and guilt of evil thoughts which are often indulged by the young ; still afterwards they fill a person with remorse, and are clamorous for his repentance, and before he repents they so burden him that he has no ease, no satisfaction. He cannot go about his ordinary duties as before ; and while all this is felt, great as is their sinfulness, they strike no secret blow, but in a certain sense counteract their own effects. But far different is it with covetousness, conceit, ambition, or resentment, which is the particular sin I am speaking of. It may have ten thousand palliations ; it may be disguised by fair names ; it affects the conscience only now and then, for a moment, and that is all ; the pang is soon over. The pang is momentary, but the ease and satisfaction and harmony of mind arising from the person's exact performance of his general duties are abiding guests within him. Whatever his duties are, these surround him : he is honest, just, temperate, self-denying ; he mixes with others, and is perhaps meek and lowly, unassuming and

affectionate ; or, if need be, firm, clear-sighted in matters of principle, zealous in conduct, pure in his motives. He enters God's house, and his heart responds to what he sees and hears there. He seems to himself to be able to say, "Thou, God, seest me!" as if he had no secret fault at all in his heart. He prays as calmly and seriously as before ; he feels, as before, his heart drawn upwards by his Lord's history, or the Psalms of David. He is conscious to himself that he is not of this world. He humbly trusts that there is nothing in this world (through God's grace) that can tempt his heart from his God and Saviour. Do you not see how his imagination is affected by all this? he is in the main what he thinks he is ; he thinks himself devoted to God in all active services, in all inward thoughts ; and so he is. He is not wrong in thinking so ; but in spite of all this, he has just one fault in a different direction,—there is a fault out of sight. He forgets, that in spite of this harmony of all within with all without for twenty-three hours of the day, there is one subject, now and then recurring, which jars with his mind,—there is just one string out of tune. Some particular person has injured him or dishonoured him, and a few minutes of each day, or of each week, are given to the indulgence of harsh, unforgiving thoughts, which at first he suspected were what they really are, sinful, but which he has gradually learned to palliate, or rather account for, on other principles, to refer to other motives, to justify on religious or other grounds.

Solomon says, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour ; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour."* Alas ! who can pretend to estimate the effect of this apparently slight transgression upon the spiritual state of any one of us? Who can pretend to say what the effect of it is in God's sight? What do the Angels think of it? What does our own guardian Angel, if one be vouchsafed us, who has watched over us, and been intimate with us from our youth up ; who joyed to see how we once grew together with God's grace, but who now is in fear for us? Alas! what is the real condition of our heart itself? Dead bodies keep their warmth a short time ; and who can tell, but a soul so circumstanced is severed from the grace of the Ordinances, though he partakes them outwardly, and is but existing upon and exhausting the small treasure of strength and life which is laid up within him? Nay, we know that so it really is, if the sin be deliberate and wilful ; for the word of Scripture assures us that such sin shuts us out from God's presence, and obstructs the channels by which He gives us grace.

Consider again, how miserable a calamity may from such a cause

* Eccl. x. 1.

be inflicted on a whole Church. The intercessions of the Saints are the life of the Church. The alms and good works, the prayers and fastings, the purity, the strict conscientiousness, the devotion of all true believers, high and low, are our safety and protection. When Satan then would afflict her in any of her branches, he begins doubtless by attempting to rob her of that in which her strength lies. He has gained a point, whenever he can entangle religious persons in some deliberate sin, when he can rouse their pride, inflame their resentment, allure their covetousness, or feed their ambitious hopes. One sin is enough: his work is done, when he can put one single obstacle in their road; and there he leaves it satisfied. And let it be observed, this applies both to the case of individuals and of the Church itself at a given time. For what we know, at this very time Satan may have succeeded in attaching some sin upon us as a people, which is working our destruction, in spite of whatever good points we may really have besides. Love of the world's good things, for instance, may be sufficient to ruin many graces. As to individuals, the case of Achan is quite in point, as you must well recollect. His own sin, secreting from among the spoils of Jericho a goodly Babylonish garment and some gold and silver, brought defeat upon the forces of Israel, and next death upon himself, and the death of his sons and his daughters. Let us not think that God's providence is materially different now, because we do not happen to see it. The chief difference between His dealings with Jews and with Christians is surely but this: they were visible to the one, to the other invisible. We do not *see* the effects of His wrath now as then, but they are as real, and more terrible as being proportioned to the greatness of the privileges abused.

And here I may notice another instance, as it may be considered, of a disobedience in one particular only, which may consist with much excellence in other respects; that of separation or alienation from the Church. When we come across persons who have seceded from the Church, or who actively oppose her, or who disbelieve some of her doctrines, it may sometimes happen that we see so much of good principle and right conduct in them, as to be perplexed, and to begin to ask ourselves whether they can be very wrong in their opinions, or whether they themselves gain any harm from them. Now here, let it be observed, I am speaking of those who go counter to the truth, when they might have known better. Again, I would not have you forget that the higher gifts of grace are altogether unseen, as well as the inflictions of God's wrath; but still let us speak of what *is* seen in those who deliberately oppose the Church. I say our imagination is likely to be effected by what appears in them of faith and holiness; and

much more the imagination of the persons themselves, who often have no doubt whatever that they are in God's favour. I repeat, I am speaking of those whom God sees to be wilful in their separation; and though we cannot know who are such, and therefore can pronounce judgment absolutely on no one, yet I would have all those who are thrown with persons who, being separatists, may be such, to bear in mind that their seeming to be holy and religious ever so much, does not prove they are really so, supposing they have this one secret sin chargeable upon them in God's books. Just as a man may be in good health, may have his arms and hands his own, his head clear, his mind active, and yet may just have one organ diseased, and the disease not at once appear, but be latent, and yet be mortal, bringing certain death in the event, so may it be with them. As, in the instance just now taken, a man may be upright and noble-minded, with a single purpose and a high resoluteness, kind and gentle, self-denying and charitable, and yet towards one certain individual may cherish feelings of revenge, and so show that some principle short of the love of God rules his heart,—so may it be with those who seem to be good men, and wilfully leave the Church. Their religious excellences, whatever these may be, are of no avail really against this or any other wilful sin.

To conclude. I have suggested but one or two thoughts on a very large subject, yet through God's mercy they may be useful. They must be useful, if they lead us to be frightened at ourselves. "Who can understand his errors?" says holy David. "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults." And how awful is the text, "Your sin shall find you out!" Who can undertake to say for himself what and when have been his wilful sins, how frequently they recur, and how continually in consequence he is falling from grace! What need have we of a cleansing and a restoration day by day! What need have we of drawing near to God in faith and penitence, to seek from Him such pardon, such assurance, such strength, as He will vouchsafe to bestow! What need have we to continue in His presence, to remain under the shadow of His throne, to make use of all the means and expedients He allows us, to be steadfast in His Ordinances, and zealous in His precepts, lest we be found shelterless and helpless when He visits the earth!

Moreover, what constant prayers should we offer up to Him that He would be merciful to us in the dreadful day of judgment! It will indeed be a fearful moment, when we stand before Him, in the sight of men and Angels, to be judged according to our works! It will be fearful for ourselves and for all our friends. Then the day of grace

will be over ; prayers will not avail then, when the books are opened. Let us then plead for ourselves and for each other while it is called to-day. Let us pray Him, by the merits of His cross and passion, to have mercy on us, to have mercy on all we love, on all the Church ; to pardon us, to reveal to us our sins, to give us repentance and amendment of life, to give us present grace, and to bestow on us, according to the riches of His love, future blessedness in His eternal kingdom.

S E R M O N I V . *

ACCEPTANCE OF RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES COMPULSORY.

LUKE xiv. 23.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

THE Parable of the Great Supper, from which these words are taken, is found also in St. Matthew's Gospel, with this especial addition, that of the guests thus brought in by force, one was found not having on a wedding garment, who in consequence was not simply dismissed as unworthy, but condemned to punishment. " Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment ? and he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth ; for many are called, but few are chosen."* " Friend *how* camest thou in hither ?" You may suppose he might have answered, " I was forced in ;" but our Saviour says, " And he was speechless," and pronounces his everlasting punishment.

Surely, there is something very awful and startling in the doctrine thus contained in the Parable. It would seem from thence that we are compelled to accept of religious advantages, for the use of which we are answerable, for the misuse of which we shall be condemned. We are compelled to become Christians, yet this compulsion is not taken

* This Sermon was not originally written for a Parish.

† Matt. xxii. 12 · 14.

into account when the day of reckoning comes. The same doctrine is implied in the parable of the talents. The servant who hid his lord's talent, seems to have had some such thoughts about fairness and justice, as the natural man so often indulges in now,—some idea of being quits and even with him, if he let his gift alone,—as if he could wash his hands (as it is said) of the whole business, and venture neither the gain nor the loss; feeling that it was a delicate matter that was put upon him, that there was great risk of failing, that his lord was an austere kind of man, hard to please, having his own views of right and duty, and unreasonable; and that consequently it was safest to keep aloof, to have no cares on any score, and so escape the danger. But here again this selfish reasoner is met by the same stern necessity, so to call it. The law of his nature is urged upon him, by the Creator of that law; a sort of uncontrollable destiny is represented as encompassing him; the destiny of accountableness, the fate of being free, the unalienable prerogative of choosing between life and death, the inevitable prospect of heaven and hell. “Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.”*—“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”†

And so again of Judas our Lord says, “Wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” Yet he was born, he was suffered to betray, and he was condemned.

The same is the doctrine of the Old Testament; as, for example, in the memorable words in the prophet Ezekiel, in which Almighty God says to the Israelites, “That which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you. . . . And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.”‡

Now, before proceeding to observe upon this very solemn and certain truth, (certain if Scripture is true,) I would entreat you to consider *who it is* who has propounded it in the parable in question. It is our Lord Christ. Here, as in other places, He has not left to His servants, He has taken upon Himself (what may be called) the responsibility, I might even say the odium, of declaring startling doctrines. Consider then His words and works, as displayed in the Gospels. Is He not the author of a religion which we every day hear called, and most truly

* Luke xix. 22.

† Matt. xxv. 30.

‡ Ez. xx. 32—37.

called, mild, beneficent, charitable, and cheering? Is not His own character, as the common voice of all men proclaims, most meek, gentle, considerate, and loving? Can any one read the history of His life and death without being himself convinced of the truth of this universal judgment? much more, can any one in any degree enter into the depths of the gracious doctrine of the Atonement, His expiation of sin on the Cross, without possessing a clear assurance that there is nothing in the whole world that can be done for us which He has not done and will not do? Yet He it is who leaves us under this bond. By His sighs and tears then, by His toilsome wanderings, by His earnest speeches, by His agony and death, by all He has done, all He has suffered, He seems to entreat us, to have confidence in Him; He condescends to entreat us to take on trust the truth and the equity of His words, when He declares that we are compelled to receive God's mercies, yet punished for the misuse of them.

Now I shall enlarge somewhat upon the general state of the case, and then show how Christians are especially interested in it.

1. In the first place, consider what first of all presents itself to our thoughts, our birth into the world. Allow that this is a world of enjoyment, yet unquestionably it is a world of care and pain also. Most men will judge that the pain on the whole exceeds the enjoyment on the whole. But, whether this be so or not with most men, even if there be *one* man in the whole world who thinks so, that is enough for my purpose, it is enough for my purpose, if only there be one person to be found, who thinks sickness, disappointment, anxiety, affliction, suffering, fear, to be such grievous ills, that he had rather not have been born. If this be the sentiment only of one man, that one man, it is plain, is as regards his very existence, what the Christian is relatively to his new birth, an unwilling recipient of a gift. We are not asked whether we will choose this world, before we are born into it. We are brought under the yoke of it, whether we will or no; since we plainly cannot choose, before the power of choice is bestowed on us, the gift of a mortal nature.

This is one of the thoughts which to the pride of reflecting but irreligious minds is sometimes a stumbling-block. Arrogant, impatient, rebellious hearts, finding themselves possessed of this gift of life and reason, fight against what they cannot undo—they turn it against itself, and argue against it by means of it. They beat and break themselves fruitlessly against the destiny to which they are chained; and since they cannot annul their creation, they think to revenge themselves by blasphemously rising against their Creator. “Why am I made? why cannot I annihilate myself? why must I suffer?” Such as these are the questions with which they fatigue themselves; sometimes even

rushing out of life by self-inflicted violence, from the frantic hope that perchance they have power over their own being. And when they have committed that fatal deed, and find themselves, as assuredly they do, still sentient, conscious, independent beings, with their own thoughts and wills and tastes and judgments, who can imagine the horror that possesses them in that their new state of existence? the horror of finding themselves without bodies, without any thing to touch, any thing to turn upon, and wreak their fury upon, nothing but themselves,—without bodies, yet living, living without aught of power over the principle of their life, which rests upon the will of Him alone, who called them into being, and whom they have blasphemed!

Or sometimes this want of resignation takes another turn. Many there are who, without thus rising against the will of God, yet will not admit that it is their duty to serve Him *under* that dispensation, whatever it is, to which he has chosen to subject them, that they are accountable for what they do, and must bring forth into action from within, under the direction of the governing principles of the mind, what may duly respond to the outward circumstances in which they are placed. Accordingly, they deliberately and on purpose suffer themselves to be borne down the stream of life passively, by whatever happens to them. Does temptation come to them? they yield to it; does danger? they are cowards; inducements to virtue? they are virtuous; is religion in fashion? they take up a profession; in no case entering into the simple and momentous truth, that the circumstances which come upon them, are matters external both to their own choice and their responsibility,—are but conditions appointed by Almighty God, under which they find themselves placed, (why, it boots not to inquire,) and which it is their wisdom to take as such, to take, use, and improve.

I have noticed these instances of want of resignation, not for their own sake, but in order to illustrate, by the contrast, that law of our birth, of which I am speaking, viz. that we are brought, without our consent being asked, into a certain state of things, into a life of suffering, and of moral discipline; and are imperatively required to obey God *under it*, as if we had brought ourselves into it, on the pain of fearful consequences, if we do not.

2. Such is our condition as men; it is the same as Christians. For instance, we are not allowed to grow up before we choose our religion. We as little choose our religion as we choose to be born. It is done for us without our having part in it. We are baptized in infancy. Our sponsors promise for us. Now considering how great on the one hand the privileges of Baptism are, and on the other how great the risk of resisting and abusing them, this is a very serious thought. St. Paul's

words about the danger of quenching the gift of grace are decisive—"It is impossible (he says) for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance."*

Now I can fancy a person saying, who had fallen into sin, "O that I had never been baptized! O that I did not incur this great risk! O that the one Baptism once applied for the remission of sins were yet to come! O that I had not already had that cleansing once for all, and were quit of the necessity of striving continually to keep myself in the state into which I have been brought!" But this cannot be; we are Christians from our earliest years; we can decline neither the great privilege nor the responsibility of it, and, instead of shrinking from the latter, rather we must comfort ourselves with the privilege, with the contemplation of the fullness of the aid given us therein to help us in all our trials; and, thus encouraged, we must go on to co-operate with God manfully.

So again with respect to our education. We are brought up as Christians. We may not, we cannot stand aloof, and say we will keep our judgment unbiassed, and decide for ourselves. We find ourselves *Christians*; and our duty is, not to consider what we should do if we were not Christians,—not to go about disputing, sifting the evidence for Christianity, weighing this side or that,—but to act upon the rules given us, till we have reason to think them wrong, and to bring home to ourselves the truth of them, as we go on, *by* acting upon them,—by their fruits on ourselves. Heathens indeed may be bound to go into the question of evidences, but our duty is to use the talents of which we find ourselves possessed, and to essay their genuineness by deeds, not by arguments.

These are instances (such as I proposed to give) of our being forced into the possession of certain advantages or disadvantages, and being obliged to act up to our state, to co-operate with it according to our internal sense of right, instead of drawing back from it. You see how parallel the Christian method is to that of nature. God appoints us by nature to be the sons of sinful Adam, responsible beings, with never-dying souls, by force, as it were; and by means of the Church, in like manner, He gives us the Sacrament of the new birth, and educates us in right principles, whether we will or no.

But this compulsion on the part of the Church is still more urgent and extensive than I have yet mentioned, and it may be right therefore

* Heb. vi. 4—6

to give a few additional instances of it, in order to impress upon your minds the principle on which it is founded.

First, then, I will instance the remarkable fact, that (as it appears) whole households were baptized by the Apostles, which must include slaves as well as children. It would seem that grown persons, if dependent on the master of the house, were, on his conversion, made partakers of his privileges and his duties. This was so ordered in the Old Testament, in the case of Abraham, whose circumcision was followed (by divine command) by the circumcision of his servants with him: "all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger."* In like manner we read in the Acts, that when Lydia was converted, not only herself was baptized, but, almost as *a matter of course*, (for such is the impression conveyed by the sacred narrative,) "her household"† was baptized also. Again, when the jailor at Philippi is baptized, it is not only he, but "he and all his straightway." Again, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul speaks of having baptized "the household of Stephanas."‡ The circumstances and conditions requisite for this procedure, and the limitations by which it was guarded, need not here be considered; I wish merely to point out the principle involved in the procedure itself.

Another remarkable instance of the force which was put upon men by the early Church, will be found in the then existing usage of bringing such as had the necessary gifts to ordination, without asking their consent. The primitive Christians looked upon ordination very differently (alas for ourselves!) very differently from this age. Now the ministerial office is often regarded as a *profession* of this world,—a provision, a livelihood; it is associated in men's minds with a comparatively easy, or at least not a troubled life,—with respectability and comfort, a competency, a position in society. Alas for us! we feel none of those terrors about it which made the early Christians flee from it! But in their eyes, (putting aside the risk of undertaking it in times of persecution,) it was so solemn a function that the holier a man was, the less inclined he felt to undertake it. They felt that it was in some sort to incur the responsibility of other men, and to be put in trust with their salvation; they felt it was scarcely possible to engage in it, without the risk of being besprinkled with the blood of ruined souls. They understood somewhat of St. Paul's language when he said that necessity was laid upon upon him, and wo to him unless he preached the Gospel. In consequence they shrank from the work, as though (to use a weak similitude) they had been bid dive down for pearls at the

* Gen. xvii. 27.

† Acts xvi. 15. 33.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 16.

bottom of the sea, or scale some precipitous and dizzy cliff. True, they knew that abundance of heavenly aid would be given them, according to their need ; but they knew also, that even if any part of the work was to be their own, though they were only called on to co-operate with God, that was in such a case fearful undertaking enough. So they literally fled away in many instances, when they were called to the sacred office ; and the Church as literally took them by force, and (after the precedent of St. Paul's own conversion) laid necessity upon them.

Once more, consider the conduct of the Church from the very first time any civil countenance was extended towards it, and you will have a fresh instance of this constraining principle of which I speak. What are national conversions, such as took place in the middle ages, when kings submitted to the Gospel and their people followed, but going out into the highways and hedges, and compelling men to come in ? And though we can conceive cases in which this urgency was unwisely, over-strongly, unseasonably, or too extensively applied, yet the principle of it is no other than that of the Baptism of households mentioned in the Acts. Again, what was it but this religious and charitable force (so to call it) which once guarded the true doctrine with state penalties, and made a man think twice and thrice before he rashly uttered any light words, or promulgated any heterodox tenet ? a public duty, which is now altogether neglected, from the abuse of it in certain times and places into cruelty and injustice, and the proneness of men on a re-action to run from one extreme into another.

And now let me notice, in conclusion, the light which the law of Providence I have been explaining casts upon the circumstances and mode in which one other ordinance of the Church is administered,—I mean Confirmation. Though in some respects individual Christians are always under the constraining power of the Church, yet, as life goes on, they are more and more withdrawn from it ; and, compared with what they were in childhood, they may at a certain time be called free men. They have no longer, at least in the same sense as before, the privilege and mercy of being dependent. Confirmation is the last act on the part of the Church before she parts with them. She blesses them, and sends them out from the home of their youth to seek their fortunes in the world. She ends her constraint of them by a blessing : she blesses them by force and lets them go. They are sent to receive it by their friends ; they submit, and are then set free. O my brethren, both young and old, this is an awful thought,—a most affecting thought, indeed, to those who witness a Confirmation, but a most awful thought to those who take part in it. You who have the care of

young people, see to it that you bring them to be confirmed ; let not the time slip by ; let them not get too old. Why ? because then you cannot bring them ; the time of constraint is passed ; they are their own masters. But you will say that you may perhaps still have influence with your children and dependents, and can get them to come, though they be passed age. Oh ! but what if we be not willing to receive them ? So perchance it may be. I mean, that when a man or woman is grown, much more is required of them than before, and they less likely to be able to answer it. When persons are young, before their minds are formed, ere they have sullied their baptismal robe, and contracted bad habits, this is the time for Confirmation, which conveys to them grace whereby they may perform that "good work" which Baptism has begun in them. But when they have gone into the world,—whatever their age be, for it varies in different persons,—when they have begun the war with world, flesh, and devil, when their minds are now grown into some determinate shape, and much more when they have wilfully sinned in any gross way, are they likely to be fitly prepared for Confirmation, even if they are persuaded to offer themselves ? When a grown person comes coldly, and indifferently, and merely because his friends send him to us, can we, ministers of Christ, receive him ? Can we receive, as if being in a mere negative state, one who, as being of mature years, ought to be mature in his religious principles also ? Beware, then, all who have the care of the young, lest you let slip the time of bringing them for God's grace, when you can bring them, for it will not return. Bring them while their hearts are tender : they may escape from you, and you may not be able to reclaim them.

On the other hand, the same considerations come home with greater force to the young themselves : it is their own concern. They who are of an age to be confirmed should come to be confirmed at once, lest they get too old to be confirmed,—I mean, lest they be first confirmed in another way, a way which will keep them from this holy confirmation ; lest they receive that miserable confirmation, which those have who rush into sin,—the touch of this infectious world, and the imposition of the devil's hand upon them. You do not know yourselves, my brethren ; you cannot answer for yourselves ; you cannot trust your own promises about yourselves ; you do not know what will become of you, unless you receive the gifts of grace *when* they are offered. They are, as it were, forced upon you now. If you put them from you, doubtless you can in this case overcome that force, you can be stronger than God's mercy. You may put off this holy ordinance, because you do not at present like a strict religious life,—because you take no interest in your future prospects. Alas ! for what you know, you will be tak-

ing a step never to be retrieved. This blessed means of grace, perchance, would change your heart and will, and make you love God's service. But the season once lost will never return. Year after year may pass, and you will be further and further from God. Perhaps you will rush into open and wilful sin ; perhaps not ; but still without loving God at all the more. Your heart may be upon the world ; you may pass through life in a cold, unbelieving, narrow spirit, with no high aims, no love of things invisible, no love of Christ your Saviour. This will be the end of your refusing the loving compulsion of Almighty God :—slavery to this world, and to the god of this world. God save us all, young and old, from this, through Jesus Christ !

SERMON V.

RELIANCE ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

LUKE xvii. 10.

When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants ; we have done that which was our duty to do.

If when we have done all, we are unprofitable, what are we when we have done but a part ? and then again, what are we, if that part itself be defective, and defiled with evil ? There is no sort of question then, that if *reason* is to be judge, there can be no boasting towards God even on the part of His most matured saints and exactest servants. There can, I say, be no boasting, because whatever we do is the fruit of His grace, and because we do very little, and because, in spite of His grace, what we do is infected with sin, and because even if we did all, we should be doing no more than we are bound to do. I cannot conceive any one who fairly gave his mind to consider the matter, whatever weight he might give to this or that consideration in particular, however disposed he might be to exalt his natural powers, or his actual

services, not coming after all to this conclusion,—to this conclusion in the judgment of *reason*.

And yet, it will be said, there are many persons in the world who are well pleased with what they are and what they do, who are well satisfied with themselves, who think themselves in so fair a way for attaining heaven, that they need not give themselves any extraordinary trouble about it; who are what is commonly called self-righteous. Now I do not allow that those *are* self-righteous necessarily who are *called* so, because there is among us much unfair and harsh judging of the feelings and motives of others; but still after all there *is* a state of mind which is self-righteous,—I mean a state of mind in which a person has no serious fears of future judgment, and is well satisfied with himself. Certainly; but this is no objection to what I have been saying, for you will find this to arise from persons *not* thinking of God. What I said just now was, that no one who thinks seriously of Almighty God, can pride himself on his services; but this is what men in general cannot bring themselves steadily to do. Self-righteous men are men who live to the world, and do not think of God. They do not think of judgment as coming one day or another. They have no fears for the future, because they have no prospect about the future. They are contented with the present, and with themselves, because they live in what is visible and tangible, and do not measure themselves by what is unseen and spiritual. “They, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise . . . for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”* Worldly men are self-righteous men.

Another class of self-righteous men are they who do not believe in the Divinity and Atonement of Christ. These men, again, do not really measure themselves by a heavenly standard and by God’s judgment; they measure themselves merely by their own conscience, and their conscience is dark and blind. They have low and narrow views of duty.

Once more, men who fasten their minds on any particular object of religion short of God become self-righteous, for they narrow field of duty, and make this object the measure of it. Hence, whether men make benevolent schemes and exertions, the whole of their religion or ceremonial observances, or maintenance of true doctrine, or obedience to any other portion of God’s law, they are insensibly led to be satisfied with their own doings, both because of the vivid consciousness which this prominent object creates in them, that religion is their chief employment, and because of the persuasion which readily comes on them that they duly act up to it. Such was the case of the Pharisee in the para

* 2 Cor. x. 12. 18.

ble. And if this is true in the case of objects and observances good in themselves, much more will it happen when men place their religion in those which are not so;—the main fault in all cases being this, that the persons in question, instead of thinking anxiously of God and His law, think only of a portion of it, which they have of themselves set apart, and make it a sort of idol. On the whole, then, what I have said is true, that in spite of the existence of self-righteous men in fact, no one can really think himself meritorious in God's sight, who comes seriously to consider himself and God, apparent exceptions being those in which persons do not think duly of either.

This I consider to be the real state of the case ; however, the popular view of spiritual pride or self-righteousness is this, that they are self-righteous, or in great danger of being so, who come often to church, and are diligent in their moral duties. Now this is the point in which I consider that there is a great deal of unfair and uncharitable judgment among us, persons being said to be satisfied with themselves who are really not so. However, our business is, when the world blames and slanders us, not to be vexed at it, but rather to consider whether there is any foundation for it, any truth at bottom, though there be exaggeration and mistake. I conceive a person may always gain good to his own soul, gain instruction and useful suggestions, by the mistakes of the world about him. Now then let us consider, from this hint given us by ignorant and prejudiced men, whether we, who are blessed with the ordinances of the Gospel, with the privilege of Prayer and Holy Communion, so frequently as we are, are or not in any special danger of spiritual pride, or as of late years it has been called, self-righteousness.

Now of course there *is* a danger of persons becoming self-satisfied, in being regular and exemplary in devotional exercises ; there is danger, which others have not, of their so attending to them as to forget that they have other duties to attend to. I mean the danger, of which I was just now speaking, of having their attention drawn off from other duties by their very attention to this duty in particular. And what is still most likely of all, persons who are regular in their devotions may be troubled with passing thoughts every now and then, that they are thereby better than other people ; and these occasional thoughts may secretly tend to make them self-satisfied, without their being aware of it, till they have a latent habit of self-conceit and contempt of others. Such cases certainly are possible or probable ; in none of them do persons actually rely on their merit, or boastfully plead their services in God's sight ; but still those services certainly seem to be a snare to them, leading some of them to forget how far they are from perfection on the whole, and how much they sin ; leading others to forget that

they have other duties also to do, and encouraging others in a quiet, unobtrusive self-complacency, while they still acknowledge themselves to be sinners. What is done stately forces itself upon the mind, impresses the memory and imagination, and seems to be a *substitute* for other duties; and what is contained in definite outward acts has a completeness and tangible form about it, which is likely to *satisfy* the mind.

I do not deny then there is some danger, lest persons who are frequent in devotional services should be as the Pharisees, do nothing else, and be well contented that they do so much. Accordingly you may hear ill-natured persons, or scoffers, say severe things against those who are strict in their religious observances, as if in other respects they were *worse* than others, or were hypocritical. All this is but the language of the world, and not to be believed; still I do not deny that persons who are frequent in prayers and other religious exercises should be jealous over themselves, and not take for granted they are going on right, particularly since their very strictness is a call on them for a more exact observance of their other duties. But all this is quite another matter, from such danger being an *objection* to observing devotional duties. If there is a danger, let it be watched and prevented, but let not the observance be omitted: there are few things which are not dangerous. All things may be perverted and abused. The great lesson set before us in the Gospel is to use the world without abusing it, and so again to use *God's mercies* without abusing them. If frequent attendance at the Lord's Table or at prayers leads to spiritual pride, unless we are watchful, our duty is *to be* watchful, not to omit attendance.

However, I do not think, after all, that there *is* any very great danger to a serious mind in the frequent use of these great privileges. Indeed, it were a strange thing to say that the simple performance of what God has told us to do *can* do harm to any but those who have not the love of God in their hearts, and to such persons all things are harmful; *they* pervert every thing into evil. It is impossible (praised be God!) that earnest and humble minds should derive any thing from Christ's ordinances but those high and ineffable blessings which are lodged in them. Christ's gifts are not snares, but mercies. Let us then see how this danger, which I have allowed to exist in devotional observances, is counteracted in the case of serious minds.

1. Now, first, the evil in question (supposing it to exist) is singularly adapted to be its own corrective. It can only do us injury when we do not know its existence. When a man knows and feels the intrusion of self-satisfied and self-complacent thoughts, here is something at once to humble him and destroy that complacency. To know of a weakness is always humbling: now humility is the very grace needed here. To know we are passionate, or slothful, or severe, is indeed the first step

towards unlearning such defects, but does not directly tend to destroy them. Knowledge of our indolence does not encourage us to exertion, but induces despondence ; but to know we are self-satisfied is a direct blow to self-satisfaction. There is no satisfaction in perceiving that we are self-satisfied. No one can be self-righteous who knows and laments his proud thoughts ; but a person may be slothful who knows and laments that he is slothful. Here then is one great safeguard against our priding ourselves on our observances. Evil thoughts do us no harm, if recognised, if repelled, if protested against by the indignation and self-reproach of the mind. It is when we do not discern them, when we admit them, when we cherish them, that they ripen into principles. And if this is true of all bad thoughts, much more is it of those now spoken of, which humble us on their detection as much as they elate us on their first entrance. I do not deny that the intrusion of such vain and foolish thoughts takes off from the comfort of our devotion, when they occur ; but that is another matter. The question is not about comfort, but about mischief. It is no good reason for giving over devotional exercises, that we have not all the comfort we might have.

2. But again, if religious persons are troubled with proud thoughts about their excellence and strictness, I think it is only when they are young in their religion, and that the trial will wear off ; and that for many reasons. I would not indeed speak with undue decision on such a point,—every one has his particular temptations ; yet one should hardly think that any but minds very young in the faith, minds to whom religion was a new thing, would pride themselves on their performances or rest upon them,—I mean, would even have the temptation to do so ; for surely it does not require much keenness of spiritual sight to see how very far our best is from what it should be. Satisfaction with our own doings, as I have said, arises from fixing the mind on some *one part* of our duty, instead of attempting the whole of it. In proportion as we narrow the field of our duties, we become able to compass them. Men who pursue only this duty or only that duty, are in danger of self-righteousness ;—zealots, bigots, devotees, men of the world, sectarians are for this reason self-righteous. For the same reason, persons beginning a religious course are self-righteous, though they often think themselves just the reverse. They consider, perhaps, all religion to lie in confessing themselves sinners, and having warm feelings concerning their redemption and justification,—in having what they consider faith ; and, as all this is fulfilled in them, they come to think they have attained and are sure of heaven ; and all because they have so very contracted a notion of the range of God's commandments, of the rounds of that ladder which reaches from earth to heaven. And in the same way, I

admit that religious persons who for one reason or another are led to begin a greater strictness in their devotional observances, in attending prayers or the Lord's Supper, or in fasting, or in almsgiving, are, on beginning, in some danger of becoming self-satisfied; for the same reason,—as fixing their minds on one certain portion of their duty and becoming excited about *it*; and this the more, inasmuch as the observances in question are something definite and precise, and on the other hand are evidently neglected by others.

But the remedy of the evil is obvious, and one which, as it will surely be applied by every religious person, because he *is* religious, will, under God's grace, effect in no long time its cure. Try to do your *whole* duty, and you will soon cease to be well-pleased with your religious state. If you are in earnest, you will try to add to your faith virtue; and the more you effect, the less will you seem to yourself to do. On the other hand, attend prayer and the Holy Eucharist without corresponding strictness in other matters; and it is plain what will follow, from the nature of the human mind, without going to more solemn considerations. The more you neglect your daily, domestic, relative, temporal duties, the more you will prize yourself on your (I cannot call them religious,) formal, ceremonial, observances. Thus it is plain that self-satisfaction is the feeling either of a beginner, or of a very defective and negligent Christian.

3. But this is not all. Certainly this objection, that devotional practices, such as prayer, fasting, and communicating, tend to self-righteousness, is the objection of those, or at least is just what the objection of those would be, who had never attempted them. Men speak as if it was the easiest thing in the world to fast and pray, and do austerities, and as if such courses were the most seductive, easiest, pleasantest, methods of attaining heaven. I do not deny that there are certain states of society, certain ages and countries, in which they are much easier than in others; but this is true of all duties. We, for instance, of this day, find *fair dealing* and *candour* as easy as some eastern nations might find fasting and meditation. But that is not the question. We are what we are,—Englishmen; and for us who are active in our habits and social in our tempers, fasting and meditation have no such great attractions, and are of no such easy observance. When then an objector fears lest such observances should make him self-righteous, were he to attempt them, I do think he is over-anxious, over-confident in his own power to fulfil them; he trusts too much in his own strength already, and, depend on it, to attempt them would make him less self-righteous, not more so. He need not be so very fearful of being too good; he may assure himself that the smallest of his Lord's command-

ments are to a spiritual mind solemn, arduous, and inexhaustible. Is it an easy thing to pray? It *is* easy to wait for a rush of feelings, and then to let your petitions be borne upon them; and never to attempt the duty till then; but it is not at all easy to be in the habit day after day and hour after hour, in all frames of mind, and under all outward circumstances, to bring before God a calm collected awakened soul. It is not at all easy to keep the mind from wandering in prayer, to keep out all intrusive thoughts about other things. It is not at all easy to realize what we are about, who is before us, what we are seeking, and what our state is. It is not at all easy to throw off the world and to understand that God and Christ hear us, that Saints and Angels are standing by us, and the devil desiring to have us. What indeed *is* after all meant, by asserting that regular and stated prayers are dangerous to a sensitive and serious mind? They are dangerous to the blind and formal: but so all things are; but where is the really serious mind that will say it is easy to take delight in stated prayer, to attend to it duly? Is not at the best our delight in it transient, and our attention irregular? Is all this satisfactory and elating?

And so again of austerities; there may be persons so constituted by nature as to take pleasure in mortifications for their own sake, and to be able to practise them adequately; and *they* certainly *are* in danger of practising them for their own sakes, not through faith, and of becoming spiritually proud in consequence; but surely it is idle to speak of this as an ordinary danger.

And so again a religious mind has a perpetual source of humiliation from *this* consciousness also, viz., how far short his *actual conduct in the world* falls short of the profession which his devotional observances involve. It is not a pleasant, not an inspiring, not an elating reflection, to think that you are making a profession which you must in some measure dishonour by your daily imperfections. There is nothing flattering and soothing in the thought that you are inviting the world to criticise you, and preparing it to expect more than it will find; to say nothing of the more bitter feelings which the profession and the vows of obedience, made in Church and broken in the world, cost you when thought of in God's sight. Alas! is it at all a comfort to add to the catalogue of those sins which we must answer for in the Last Day? yet this we must do, or at least run the risk of it, if we attempt those services which some persons would persuade us necessarily tend to self-righteousness.

4. But, after all, what is this shrinking from responsibility, which fears to be obedient lest it should fail, but cowardice and ingratitude? What is it, but the very conduct of the Israelites, who, when Almighty

God bade them encounter their enemies and so gain Canaan, feared the sons of Anak because they were giants? To fear to do our duty lest we should become self-righteous in doing it, is to be wiser than God; it is to distrust Him; it is to do and to feel like the unprofitable servant who hid his Lord's talent, and then laid the charge of his sloth on his Lord, as being a hard and austere man. At best we are unprofitable servants when we have done all; but if we are but unprofitable when we do our best to be profitable, what are we, when we fear to do our best, but unworthy to be His servants at all? No! to *fear* the *consequences* of obedience is to be worldly-wise, and to go by reason when we are bid go by faith. Let us dare to do His commandments, leaving to Him to bring us through who has imposed them. Let us risk dangers which cannot in truth be realized, however they threaten, since He has bid us risk them, and will protect us in them. Let us bear, what probably will befall us, the assaults of Satan, the sins of infirmity, the remains of the old Adam, involuntary mistakes, the smarting of our wounds, and the dejection and desolateness ensuing, if it be His will. He has promised to lead us safely heavenward, in spite of all things being against us; He will keep us from all wilful sin; but the infirmities which beset us, our ignorances, waywardnesses, weaknesses, and misconceptions, these He still ordains should try us and humble us, should move in us vexation of spirit and self-abasement, and should bring us day by day to the foot of His Cross for pardon. Let us then compose ourselves, and bear a firm and courageous heart. Let us steel ourselves, not against self-reproach and self-hatred, but against unmanly fear. Let us feel what we really are,—sinners attempting great things, and succeeding at best only so far as to show that we attempt them. Let us simply obey God's will, whatever may befall; whether it tend to elate us or to depress us, what is that to us? He can turn all things to our eternal good. He can bless and sanctify even our infirmities. He can lovingly chastise us, if we be puffed up, and He can cheer us when we despond. He can and will exalt us the more we afflict ourselves; and we shall afflict ourselves the more, in true humbleness of mind, the more we really obey Him. Blessed are they who in any matter do His will; and they are thrice blessed who, in what they are doing, are also interesting themselves, as in the case which has been under our consideration, in His special sacramental promises. Blessed indeed are they, who, while obeying God, are seeking Christ; who, while they do a duty, receive a privilege; who commemorate His death because He bids them, and while they do so gain the virtue of it in the commemoration; who live in Him, both in the thought of Him and the possession of Him; who glory in Him who died for them, and was

buried, and rose again, and now lives in their hearts ; who are willing to take their part with Him, in suffering as in joy ; who willingly associate themselves in that Mysterious Communion which He offers them, and which, though it brings glory in the end, brings sufferings and affliction at present,—which makes them at present in a special way heirs of tears and pain and disappointment and reproach, heirs of special trials which may come upon them though they live in the most peaceful times, which may come without the world perceiving that they differ in their lot from other men, trials which work for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and which in the present world are recompensed by the faith, humility, patience, and gentleness resulting from them.

SERMON VI.

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF THE SOUL.

ECCLESIASTES xii. 7.

The spirit shall return unto God, who gave it.

HERE we are told that upon death the spirit of man returns to God. The sacred writer is not speaking of good men only, or of God's chosen people, but of men generally. In the case of all men, the soul, when severed from the body, returns to God. God gave it: He made it, He sent it into the body, and He upholds it there ; He upholds it in distinct existence, wherever it is. It animates the body while life lasts ; it returns again, it relapses into the unseen state, upon death. Let us steadily contemplate this truth, which at first sight we may fancy we altogether enter into. The point to be considered is this, that every soul of man which is or has been on earth, has a separate existence ; and that, in eternity, not in time merely,—in the unseen world, not merely in this,—not only during its mortal life, but ever from the hour of its creation, whether joined to a body of flesh or not.

Nothing is more difficult than to realize that every man has a distinct soul, that every one of all the millions who live or have lived, is as whole and independent a being in himself, as if there were no one else in the whole world but he. To explain what I mean : do you think that a commander of an army realizes it, when he sends a body of men on some dangerous service ? I am not speaking as if he was wrong in so sending them ; I only ask in matter of fact, does he, think you, commonly understand that each of those poor men has a soul, a soul as dear to himself, as precious in its nature as his own ? Or does he not rather look on the body of men collectively, as one mass, as parts of a whole, as but the wheels or springs of some great machine, to which he assigns the individuality, not to each soul that goes to make it up ?

This instance will show what I mean, and how open we all lie to the remark, that we do not understand the doctrine of the distinct individuality of the human soul. We class men in masses, as we might connect the stones of a building. Consider our common way of regarding history, politics, commerce, and the like, and you will own that I speak truly. We generalize, and lay down laws, and then contemplate these creations of our own minds, and act upon and towards them, as if they were the real things, dropping what are more truly such. Take another instance : when we talk of national greatness, what does it mean ? Why, it really means that a certain distinct definite number of immortal individual beings happen for a few years to be in circumstances to act together and one upon another, in such a way as to be able to act upon the world at large, as to gain an ascendancy over the world, to gain power and wealth, and to look like one, and to be talked of and to be looked up to as one. They seem for a short time to be some one thing ; and we, from our habit of living by sight, regard them as one, and drop the notion of their being any thing else. And when this one dies and that one dies, we forget that it is the passage of separate immortal beings into an unseen state, that the whole which appears is but appearance, and that the component parts are the realities. No, we think nothing of this ; but though fresh and fresh men die, and fresh and fresh men are born, so that the whole is ever shifting, yet we forget all that drop away, and are insensible to all that are added ; and we still think that this whole, which we call the nation, is one and the same, and that the individuals who come and go, exist only in it and for it, and are but as the grains of a heap or the leaves of a tree.

Or again, survey some populous town : crowds are pouring through the streets ; some on foot, some in carriages ; while the shops are full, and the houses too, could we see into them. Every part of it is full of life. Hence we gain a general idea of splendour, magnificence, opu-

lence, and energy. But what is the truth? why, that every being in that great concourse is his own centre, and all things about him are but shades, but a "vain shadow," in which he "walketh and disquieteth himself in vain." He has his own hopes and fears, desires, judgments, and aims; he is every thing to himself, and no one else is really any thing. No one outside of him can really touch him, can touch his soul, his immortality; he must live with himself for ever. He has a depth within him unfathomable, an infinite abyss of existence; and the scene in which he bears part for the moment is but like a gleam of sunshine upon its surface.

Again: when we read history, we meet with accounts of great slaughters and massacres, great pestilences, famines, conflagrations, and so on; and here again we are accustomed in an especial way to regard collections of people as single individuals. We cannot understand that a multitude is a collection of immortal souls.

I say immortal souls: each of those multitudes, not only *had* while he was upon earth, but *has* a soul, which did in its own time but return to God who gave it, and not perish, and new lives unto Him. All those millions upon millions of human beings who ever trod the earth and saw the sun successively, are at this very moment in existence all together. This, I think, you will grant we do not duly realize. All those Canaanites, whom the children of Israel slew, every one of them is somewhere in the universe, now at this moment, where God has assigned him a place. We read, "They utterly destroyed all that was in" Jericho, "young and old." Again, as to Ai; "So it was that all that fell that day, both of men and women, were twelve thousand." Again, "Joshua took Makkedah, Lihmah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, Debir, and smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein."* Every one of those souls still lives. They had their separate thoughts and feelings when on earth, they have them now. They had their likings and pursuits; they gained what they thought good, and enjoyed it; and they still somewhere or other live, and what they then did in the flesh surely has its influence upon their present destiny. They live, reserved for a day which is to come, when all nations shall stand before God.

But why should I speak of the devoted nations of Canaan, when Scripture speaks of a wider, more comprehensive judgment, and in one place appears to hint at the present state of awful waiting in which they are who were involved in it? What an overwhelming judgment was the Flood! all human beings on the earth but eight were cut off by it.

* Josh. vi. viii. x.

That old world of souls still lives, though its material tabernacle was drowned. Scripture, I say, signifies this; obscurely indeed, yet still, as it appears, certainly. St. Peter speaks of "the spirits in prison," that is, *then* in prison, who had been "disobedient," "when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."* Those many, many souls, who were violently expelled from their bodies by the waters of the deluge, were alive two thousand years afterwards, when St. Peter wrote. Surely they are all alive still.

And so of all the other multitudes we any where read of.—All the Jews who perished in the siege of Jerusalem, still live; Sennacherib's army still lives; Sennacherib himself still lives; all the persecutors of the Church that ever were, are still alive. The kings of Babylon are still alive; they are still, as they are described by the Prophet, weak indeed now, and in "hell beneath," but having an account to give, and waiting for the day of summons. All who have ever gained a name in the world, all the mighty men of war that ever were, all the great statesmen, all the crafty counsellors, all the scheming aspirants, all the reckless adventurers, all the covetous traders, all the proud voluptuaries, are still in being, though helpless and unprofitable. Balaam, Saul, Joab, Ahitophel, good and bad, wise and ignorant, rich and poor, each has his separate place, each dwells by himself in that sphere of light or darkness, which he has provided for himself here. What a view this sheds upon history! We are accustomed to read it as a tale or a fiction, and we forget that it concerns immortal beings, who cannot be swept away, who are what they were, however this earth may change.

And so again all the names we see written on monuments in churches or churchyards, all the writers whose names and works we see in libraries, all the workmen who raised the great buildings, far and near, which are the wonder of the world, they are all in God's remembrance, they all live.

It is the same with those whom we ourselves have seen, who now are departed. I do not now speak of those whom we have known and loved. These we cannot forget; we cannot rid our memory of them: but I speak of all whom we have *ever* seen; it is also true that they live. Where we know not, but live they do. We may recollect when children, perhaps once seeing a person; and it is almost like a dream to us now, that we did. It seems like an accident which goes and is all over, like some creature of the moment, which has no existence beyond it. The rain falls, and the wind blows; and showers and storms have no existence beyond the time when we felt them; they are

* 1 Pet. iii. 20.

nothing in themselves. But if we have but once seen any child of Adam, we have seen an immortal soul. It has not passed away as a breeze or sunshine, but it lives; it lives at this moment in one of those many places, whether of bliss or misery, in which all souls are reserved until the end.

Or again, let us call to mind those whom we knew a little better, though not intimately :—all who died suddenly or before their time, all whom we have seen in high health and spirits, all whom we have seen in circumstances which in any way brought out their characters, and gave them some place in our memories. They are gone from our sight, but they all live still, each with his own thoughts; they are waiting for the judgment.

I think we shall say that these thoughts concerning others are not familiar to us; yet no one can say they are not just. And I think too that those concerning them, which *are* familiar, are not those which become believers in the Gospel; whereas these which I have been tracing, do become us, as tending to make us think less of this world, with its hopes and fears, its plans, successes, and enjoyments.

Moreover, every one of all the souls which have been on earth is, as has been already implied, in one of two moral conditions, so distinct from one another, that one is the subject of God's favour, and the other under His wrath; the one in the way to eternal happiness, the other to eternal misery. And what is true of the dead, is true of the living also. All are tending one way or the other; there is no middle or neutral state for any one; though as far as the sight of the external world goes, all men seem to be in a middle state common to one and all. Yet, much as men look the same, and impossible as it is for us to say where each man stands in God's sight, there are two and but two classes of men, and these have characters and destinies as far apart in their tendencies as light and darkness: this is the case even of those who are in the body, and it is much more true of those who have passed into the unseen state.

No thought of course is more overpowering than that every one who lives or has lived is destined for endless bliss or torment. It is far too vast for us to realize. But what especially increases the mind's confusion and incapacity when it attempts to do so, is what I have just alluded to, that there are but these two states, that every individual among us is either in one or the other,—that the states in which we individually are placed are so unspeakably contrary to each other, while we look so like each other. It is certainly quite beyond our understandings, that all we should now be living together as relatives, friends, associates, neighbours; that we should be familiar or intimate

with each other, that there should be among us a general intercourse, circulation of thought, interchange of good offices, the action of mind upon mind, and will upon will, and conduct upon conduct, and yet after all that there should be a bottomless gulf between us, running among us invisibly, and cutting us off into two parties;—not indeed a gulf impassable here, God be praised!—not impassable till we pass into the next world, still really existing, so that every person we meet is in God's unerring eye either on the one side or the other, and, did He please to take him hence at once, would find himself either in paradise or in the place of torment. Our Lord observes this concerning the Day of judgment, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

What makes this thought still more solemn, is that we have reason to suppose that souls on the wrong side of the line are far more numerous than those on the right. It is wrong to speculate; but it is safe to be alarmed. Thus much we know, that Christ says expressly, "Many are called, few are chosen;" "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat;" whereas "narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be who find it."

If then it is difficult, as I have said it is, to realize that all who ever lived still live, it is as difficult at least to believe that they are in a state either of eternal rest or eternal woe: that all whom we have known and who are gone, are, and that we who still live, were we now to die, should then at once be, either in the one state or the other. Nay, I will say more: when we think seriously on the subject, it is almost impossible to comprehend, I do not say that a great number, but that any person whom we see before us, however unsatisfactory appearances may be, is really under God's displeasure, and in a state of reprobation. So hard is it to live by faith! People feel it to be a difficulty to have to admit certain doctrines of the Church, which are more or less contrary to sight. For instance, they say as an argument against regeneration in Baptism, "Is it possible that all who have been baptized can have been born again, considering what lives they lead?" They make the evidence of sight tell against a doctrine which demands their faith. Yet after all, is there anything more startling, more difficult to believe, than that any one person, whom we see, however sinful his life, is at present under God's eternal wrath, and would incur it if he were to die at once, and will incur it unless he repents? This is what we cannot bring ourselves to believe. All we commonly allow is, that certain persons are what we call "*in danger of hell.*" Now, if by using this cautious phrase we mean merely to express, that irreligious men may repent be-

fore death, or that men may seem to be irreligious to us, who are not so, and therefore that it is safer to speak of men being in danger of God's wrath than actually under it ; so far is well. But we are in error if we mean, as is often the case, to deny thereby that irreligious men, as such, whether men can ascertain them or not, are at this very time, not only in danger, but actually under the power of God's wrath. Healthy men in a sickly country may be said to be in danger of sickness ; soldiers in a battle are in danger of wounds ; but irreligious men not only are in danger, but lie under God's eternal curse ; and when we see an irreligious man, we see one who is under it, only we speak guardedly, both as hoping that he may repent, and as feeling that we may be mistaken. But whether or not men be what they seem, or whether or not they are to change, certain it is that every one who dies, passes at once into one or other of two states ; and if he dies unsanctified and unreconciled to God, into a state of eternal misery.

How little the world at large realizes this, is shown by the conduct of surviving friends after a loss. Let a person who is taken away have been ever so notorious a sinner, ever so confirmed a drunkard, ever so neglectful of Christian ordinances, and though they have no reason for supposing any thing hopeful was going on in his mind, yet they will generally be found to believe that he has gone to heaven ; they will confidently talk of his being at peace, of his pains being at an end, of his happy release, and the like. They enlarge on these subjects ; whereas their duty lies in keeping silence, waiting in trembling hope, and being resigned. Now, why is it they speak and think in this manner ? Apparently because they cannot conceive it possible that he or that they should be lost. Even the worst men have qualities which endear them to those who come near them. They have human affections in some shape or other. Even the Witch of Endor showed a sympathy and kindness towards her guest, which moves us. Human feelings cannot exist in hell, and we cannot bring ourselves to think that they are subjects of hell who have them. And for this reason men cannot admit the bare possibility of another being lost ; they reject the idea, and therefore, when a man dies, they conclude, as the only alternative, that he must be in Abraham's bosom ; and they boldly say so, and they catch at some half sentence which he said during his illness, when he was calmer or weaker, or at the ease with which he died, in confirmation of their belief.

And if it is difficult to believe that there are any persons among us at this moment in a state of spiritual death, how shall we understand, what perchance is the case, that there are many such, perhaps multitudes ? how shall we persuade ourselves of the great truth that, in spite of outward appearances, human society, as we find it, is but a part of an invis-

ible world, and is really divided into but two companies, the sons of God, and the children of the wicked one ; that some souls are ministered unto by Angels, others led captive by devils ; that some are “ fellow-citizens of the saints,” and of the invisible “ household of God,” and others companions of those His enemies in time past, who now are waiting in prison for the judgment ?

How blessed would it be, if we really understood this ! What a change it would produce in our thoughts, unless we were utterly reprobate, to understand what and where we are,—accountable beings on their trial, with God for their friend and the devil for their enemy, and advanced a certain way on their road either to heaven or to hell. No truths indeed, ever so awful, ever so fully brought home to the mind, will change it, if the love of God and of holiness be not there ; but none among us, as we may humbly trust, is in this reprobate state. One wishes to think that no one has so done despite to the Spirit of grace, and so sinned against the Blood of the Covenant, as to have nothing of his regenerate nature left to him ; no one among us, but, if he shut his eyes to the external world, and opened them to the world within him, contemplated his real state and prospects, and called to mind his past life, would be brought to repentance and amendment. Endeavour then, my brethren, to realize that you have souls, and pray God to enable you to do so. Endeavour to disengage your thoughts and opinions from the things that are seen ; look at things as God looks at them, and judge of them as He judges. Pass a very few years, and you will actually experience what as yet you are called on to believe. There will be no need of the effort of mind to which I invite you, when you have passed into the unseen state. There will be no need of shutting your eyes to this world, when this world has vanished from you, and you have nothing before you but the throne of God, and the slow but continual movements about it in preparation of the judgment. In that interval, when you are in that vast receptacle of disembodied souls, what will be your thoughts about the world which you have left ! how poor will then seem to you its highest aims, how faint its keenest pleasures, compared with the eternal aims, the infinite pleasures, of which you will at length feel your souls to be capable ! O my brethren, let this thought be upon you day by day, especially when you are tempted to sin. Avoid sin as a serpent ; it looks and promises well ; it bites afterwards. It is dreadful in memory, dreadful even on earth ; but in that awful period, when the fever of life is over, and you are waiting in silence for the judgment, with nothing to distract your thoughts, who can say how dreadful may be the memory of sins done in the body ? Then the very apprehension of their punishment, when Christ shall suddenly visit, will doubtless outweigh a thousand fold

their gratification, such as it was, which you felt in committing them ; and if so, what will be the proportion between it and that punishment, if after all it be actually inflicted ? Let us lay to heart our Saviour's own most merciful words, "Be not afraid," He says, "of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you, whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear Him."

S E R M O N V I I .

CHASTISEMENT AMID MERCY.

MICAH vii. 8, 9.

Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ; when I fall, I shall arise ; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him.

It very commonly happens that men, who in youth or early life live in a thoughtless way, without restraint over themselves, not indeed scoffing or objecting against religion, but running into sin more or less according to the accident of external temptations, as time goes on and they get older, or when they get settled in life, or from other causes, become more serious than they were, and turn out what is called respectable and excellent men. Nay, persons who have gone farther than this, who have led regularly bad lives,—been drunkards and profligates, or even unbelievers, are tamed down in the course of years, and become decent or well conducted, or even religious ; nay, not only in appearance religious, but perhaps they become really good men, bent on doing their duty, and making up for what they have done wrong, so that one cannot help feeling love and respect for them. And what is the conduct of the world in such cases ? It is very generous, or rather indulgent. It passes over every thing that has happened, and regards and treats them just as if they had never gone wrong. And what again is the conduct towards them of a great number of religious men ? They conclude in cases where there is a

fair appearance of seriousness in their present behaviour, that God has so absolutely and utterly forgiven all that has passed, as if it had never been committed; and, with that sort of liberality, in so many ways now common, so untrue, yet so easy to those who exercise it, they give away freely what is it not theirs to give, and speak and act as if it lay with them to pronounce God's "absolution and remission" of the sins of others. And what effect has such treatment on those who are the subjects of it? Of course, to make them forget that they have been sinners, and to consider themselves on a level with those who have never been sinners. So that they never look back at their past lives with fear; but, rather, when they speak of the past, there is in their tone sometimes even something of tenderness and affection for their former selves;—or at best they speak of themselves in a sort of moralizing way, as they might of sinners they read of, as if it was not now *their* concern, what they then were, or as if the contrast between what they were and are did but set off to advantage their present spiritual estate. And thus, without going to those somewhat extreme cases, where a man almost makes his former sins a mode of entering *into* God's favour, a sort of necessary preparation for being spiritually minded, and so far a sort of boast and glory, there are a very great many cases, I fear, where persons, religious and well-meaning, according to the ordinary standard, are little or not at all impressed with the notion that their past sins, whether from their moral consequences, or as remembered by God, are a present disadvantage to them.

This, I conceive, in one shape or other, to be a very common state of mind. For instance, I can fancy persons, especially young persons, coming into temptation, and from one cause or other, through God's mercy, escaping from it. Either the temptation went before they could make up their minds to the sin, or their minds were diverted in other ways. And I can fancy them afterwards, it is a shocking thing to say, vexed with themselves that they did not commit the sin to which they were tempted; as if it now would be over,—as if they would not in such a case be worse now than they actually are, and they would have enjoyed the "pleasures of sin for a season," but, as it is, had lost an opportunity. Now a person who so feels, clearly does not understand that sin *leaves* a burden upon the soul, which has to be got rid of. He thinks it is done and over,—the question of guilt, pollution, punishment, not occurring to him. Nothing surely is more common among persons of the most various characters of mind than thus to think that God forgets sin as soon as we forget it.

Again: take another instance, applicable especially at this time. Whole bodies of men rush into sin, and while they sin, even do not

allow that they sin, because each shelters himself behind the other, and thinks that what is no one person's sin is no sin at all. This of itself is a strange view of the case, yet it is very common. Men call themselves the *nation* when they sin in a body, and think that the nation, being a name, has nothing to answer for, and may do what it will ; that its acts are only the "course of events," and necessary, as the motion of the earth. They do very rash acts, without the fear of God before their eyes, making large and bold changes ; (whether allowably or not, is not here the question ; their plain fault being that they do not *ask* themselves whether or not it *is* allowable,—the question does not enter their minds ;) I say they make large changes,—they endanger God's holy religion,—they encourage scoffers and deceivers. Then perhaps, they see they have gone too far, and they change their course ; perhaps try to reverse what they have done. Now the thought never crosses them that any one has any thing to repent of ; or, if they are determined to put the blame on the nation, that the nation has any thing to repent of. Accordingly, persons who hail the return of any portion of the nation to a sounder state of mind, never hint or seem to feel that a national sin has been committed, that Almighty God has books in which are set down the events of every year and day, books which will be opened at the Day of judgment, and men judged out of them.

Further : perhaps particular *persons* had been forward in the evil course, in direct opposition to the cause of truth and holiness ; and *they* change their mind and adopt another line of (what is called) politics. They are right in so doing ; but no one ever seems to doubt that the change wipes out the fault, no one ever has the real kindness to hint to them that they have committed a sin : to show any recollection of the past, is thought to arise, as it often does, from personal feeling, and to be impolitic and unwise. Such persons are hailed as a succour, not thoughtfully and religiously regarded as penitents.

Many other instances might be given from which it is clear that men commonly think a sin to be cancelled when it is done and over, or, in other words, that *amendment is an expiation*. If I were to give this tone of mind a name, I should call it a practical Socinianism.

Now it will be answered that the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ are sufficient to wash out all sin, and that they really do wash it out. Doubtless ; but the question to be decided is, whether He has promised to apply His all-sufficient merits at once on persons doing nothing more than changing their mode of living. Surely if any truth of the Bible is clear, it is that He gives to those who ask, not to those who do not ask. Yet the fact is, as I would maintain, that men in general do not

take the trouble to ask, or, in other words, to repent ; but they think the change, or apparent change, or improvement itself stands instead of repentance, as a sort of means, a sacramental means, imparting forgiveness by itself, by its own virtue, as a work done ;—or they think that the state of grace in which they are is such as to absorb (as it were) and consume all sin as fast as it springs up in the heart ;—or they think that faith has this power of obliterating and annihilating sin, so that in fact there is nothing on their consciences to repent of. They consider faith as superseding repentance. Such seem to be their thoughts, as far as they have any on the subject.

But, again : it may be objected that we are told that “there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” But I reply as before, that the persons I am speaking of do not repent, unless the mere fact of amendment be repentance. We may, if we please, maintain that there is no such thing as repentance distinct from amendment ; that the feeling, whatever it is, which prompts amendment, is repentance, or includes repentance ; that the word repentance is, practically speaking, but a figure of speech, and means reformation. But let us speak plainly, if such is our meaning, and then we shall have to prove it from Scripture. But surely Scripture cannot be said thus to hide or dissipate repentance in other acts or courses of conduct. It surely describes it as a duty, distinct from other duties,—as a condition distinct, though of course inseparable, from other conditions, such as faith and amendment may be. We have instances of acts of faith in Scripture, and instances of acts of repentance ; and it would be as reasonable to say there is no such Christian grace as faith, because it is ever joined with and lives in other graces, as to say that repentance is not a real, substantive, and independent exercise of mind because it presupposes faith and terminates in amendment. When St. Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” this was an act of faith ; when he “went out and wept bitterly,” this was an act of repentance ;—when the Prodigal Son said, “I will arise and go to my father,” this was an act of faith ; when he said, “Make me as one of thy hired servants,” this was an act of repentance. When “the Publican did not so much as lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner,” this was an act of repentance. When the woman who had been a sinner washed our Saviour’s feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, this was an act of repentance in one who loved much. When Zacchæus gave half his goods to the poor, and restored fourfold what he had wrongfully obtained, this was an act of repentance in one who would fain undo the past. They are acts of a mind, lingering and engaged in the

past, as hope is engaged in contemplating the future. It is common enough at present to speak lightly of the past as it *was* past and could not be helped, as if we could not reverse the past. We cannot literally reverse it; yet surely instances such as the foregoing are the acts of persons who would if they could; who, as it were, are trying to do so, and in a manner doing so from the intense feeling of their hearts.

✓ Regret, vexation, sorrow, such feelings seem to this busy, practical, unspiritual generation as idle; as something despicable and unmanly,—just as tears may be. And to many men it seems religious to say that such feelings argue a want of faith in Christ's merits. They *are* unbelieving, they *are* irrational, if they are nothing more than remorse, bitterness, gloom, and despondency. Such is "the sorrow of the world" which "worketh death." Yet there is a "godly sorrow" also; a positive sorrowing for sin, and a deprecation of its consequences, and that quite distinct from faith or amendment; and this so far from being a barren sorrow, "worketh," as the Apostle assures us, "repentance to salvation, not to be repented of." "Behold this self-same thing," continues the Apostle to the Corinthians, "that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."* Faith, then, neither is repentance, nor stands instead of it.

Here, however, we are met with another objection. It is said that if a man be changed in heart and life, this is a plain proof that he has been revisited by God's grace; and if so, he is in God's favour, *or* in other words, his past sins are already forgiven him. I answer, by denying what is here assumed; I would say, then, that a man may be in God's favour, yet his sins not absolutely forgiven; that faith brings him into God's favour, yet a long repentance may be necessary for his forgiveness; that faith brings him into God's favour at once, that he may receive grace to repent continually.

It may seem a contradiction, first to say that God loves a man, and next that a remnant of His displeasure is in store for him; but we are so profoundly ignorant of Him, whose thoughts and ways are not as ours, that if we have proof of the fact in His inspired word, it is our wisdom to believe that it is a fact, and leave difficulties to Him who in His good time will explain them. For instance; few persons, comparatively speaking, would maintain that a man once in a state of grace cannot fall away; now here in like manner, it might be asked

* 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

how can God at present love one whom He has appointed to everlasting punishment? As, then, souls may be at present in God's favour, whom He foresees to be His impenitent enemies, and companions of devils for ever, so others also much more may be in His favour against whom an unsettled reckoning lies, the issue of which is uncertain, who have certain sins as yet unforgiven, and certain consequences of sins as yet unprovided for. The young man whom our Lord bade give up all and follow Him, went away sorrowful and unforgiven: yet Christ is said to have "loved him." Again, how is it that God is loving over all His works, yet is angry with the wicked? His love then does not necessarily exclude His anger, nor His favour His severity, nor His grace His justice. How He reconciles these together, we know not; thus much we know, that those who forsake their sins, and come to Him for grace, are in His favour, and obtain what they need for the day; but that they are forgiven at once all the past, we do not know.

The following instances from Scripture seem to prove the contrary:—When David, for example, said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord," this act of repentance was allowed to avail for much. "Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin; *thou shalt not die.*" The extreme debt of sin was remitted; yet the Prophet goes on to say, "Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die."* David then had the prospect of a punishment for his sin after it was remitted, and what did he do in consequence? he sought to deprecate God, he exercised that life of faith and prayer which had been renewed in him in acts of repentance, if so be to deprecate God's wrath. As then he was not allowed to take his restoration as a proof that God would not punish, neither have we any ground to conclude, merely because God vouchsafes to work in us what is good, that therefore what is past will never rise up in judgment against us. It may, or it may not: we trust, nay may cheerfully confide, that if we go on confessing, repenting, deprecating, and making amends, it will not; but there is no reason to suppose it will not unless we do.

Again: Moses was excluded from the promised land for speaking unadvisedly with his lips. Was he therefore "blotted out of God's book?" Was he not in a justified state, though under punishment? and does not that great Saint show us how to meet the prospect of God's judgment, when he earnestly supplicates God to pardon him what seemed so small a sin, and to let him go over Jordan? And can

* 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

we have a more striking instance of this double condition in which we stand, after sinning and returning, than when so great a Saint as Moses, who was faithful in all the house of God, who saw God's face, and was the mediator for His people, yet beseeches Him, "O Lord God, I pray Thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon;" and the Almighty remains still unappeased, and "will not hear" him, and says, "Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter,"* Yet Moses, though he did not gain all he would by his earnest prayer, gained something. His punishment was lightened. He was allowed to ascend Pisgah, and see the land.

Again: when the prophet from Judah had disobediently turned back to the old prophet's house, and had death denounced against him, and was met by the lion, was he at that moment in God's favour or not? Are we to suppose because he died under a judgment that he died impenitent and unreconciled, and had his portion with Jeroboam and the worshippers of calves?

However, it may be objected to these instances that they come from the Old Testament, that they took place before Christ came, and that little indeed is said in the New Testament about the chance of such judgments, and the necessity of such deprecation on the part of Christians. In answer, I allow that there is very little in the New Testament concerning the punishment of Christians; but then there is as little said about their sins; so that if Scripture negatives every thing which it is silent about, it would be as easy to show that the Gospel does not belong to those who have lapsed into sin, as that punishments are not their portion, and penitential acts their duty. As the sins of Christians are beyond the ordinary contemplation of Scripture, so are their remedies.

It will take some time to show this of the New Testament, yet it is worth attempting it from its importance. I say, then, that many as are the passages in the New Testament, which describe a state of salvation, none of them, excepting one or two, mention *continual* pardon as among the privileges of that state, but as a gift once given on entering into it. The notion of sins in Christians, other than sins of infirmity, is, for whatever reason, scarcely contemplated in Scripture. The few texts that speak of pardon, such as, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," do not state the *means* by which we are to interest ourselves in the pardon; whereas there are many texts on the other hand which do signify acts of penitence and satisfaction as neces-

* Deut. iii. 24—26.

sary in order to pardon. For instance, St. Paul, as above cited, speaks of such acts in the case of the Corinthians, and St. James as decisively of "*mercy*," i. e. alms-giving and the like, "rejoicing against judgment." Now to show this at length.

Now, first, I need hardly call to mind the passages in which sins are expressly declared to be forgiven when persons *first* enter into the kingdom of God. For instance, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins,"* says Ananias to St. Paul before his baptism. So St. Peter to the multitude, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the *remission of sins*;" but what was to follow? "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."† This, then, was to be their state *henceforth*, not a state of sinning, but of the spirit of holiness; their divine birth and life were such as to need no forgiveness, in the sense in which they had needed it before. Hence in the verses which follow we read, "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers . . . All that believed were together, and had all things common, and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need; and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people."‡ Or again, take St. Paul's description, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience." And so he proceeds enumerating the fruits of the Holy Ghost in the heart, but not a word about fresh sins and fresh forgiveness in that state; as if while we remain in the Holy Ghost, this cannot be. Again, in the third chapter of the same Epistle, he speaks of "the remission of sins that *are past*," not a word of sins which are to come. In another Epistle, he says that Christ is the Mediator "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the *first* Testament;" he does not say "under the *second*." St. Peter, in like manner, after going through the parts of a Christian character, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, and the like, adds, "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and is forgetful of the *cleansing from his former sins*."§ Thus he reminds such a one of that former cleansing, and is silent about the gift of a second for his lack of holiness. Again, St. John addresses three

* Acts xxii. 16. † Acts. ii. 38. ‡ Acts ii. 42—47. § 2 Pet. i. 9.

classes of Christians,—beginners, the manly, and the mature ; he reminds the beginners of the forgiveness of their sins, for this was the peculiar privilege of those who were just entering the kingdom—"I write unto you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His Name's sake ;"* but this is not said to the other two ; no, the young men in the faith are those who "are *strong*, and the word of God abideth in them, and they *have overcome* the wicked one ;" and the elders are they who "have known Him, that is from the beginning." Thus is Christian life marked out,—first forgiveness, then warfare, then contemplation ; whereas the chief notion, that many men now have of a saving state, is but of a warfare which is disgraced with defeat, and of a contemplation disjoined from holiness.

Far different is the Apostle's way of viewing the Christian state. We are taken *from* sin, not forgiven in it merely. For instance ; this is St. Peter's account of our election in Christ—"Who His own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, *that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness* ; by whose stripes ye *were* healed, for ye *were* as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."† And St. Paul, "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, *and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.*"‡ You see that the Apostle's one broad idea of a state of salvation is one not of sinning and being forgiven, but of holiness ; though now men often consider that the *highest* excellence of a Christian is to cry out, "O wretched man that I am !" Again, "how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your *conscience from dead works to serve the living God* ?"§ Again, in another Epistle he speaks of forgiveness emphatically as *the* forgiveness, *the* redemption, as if there was but one great forgiveness ; "In whom we have *the* redemption through His blood, *the* forgiveness of sins ;"§ and he says just before that, "He hath chosen us . . . that *we should be holy* and without blame before Him in love." And in another chapter, "Christ . . . loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it in the washing of water by the word ;"¶ *then* is the forgiveness, and why ? The Apostle proceeds, "That He might present it unto Himself a *glorious* Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be *holy* and without blemish."

In like manner, the prayers and good wishes which the Apostles send their brethren do not contain any prayers for forgiveness. This is

* 1 John ii. 12.

† 1 Peter, ii. 24, 25.

‡ Tit. ii. 14.

|| Hebrews ix. 14.

§ Eph. i. 7.

¶ Eph. v. 26.

remarkable; they pray God to bless them, make them more and more holy, and the like, but not to pardon their sins. Not as if Christians do not sin; I began by assuming that, alas, they do; I only say that the New Testament mainly contemplates them when they were different, and gives little information how to treat them as we find them; and therefore obliges us to have recourse to the Old Testament. For instance, St. Paul prays for the Ephesians, that they may have "the spirit of *wisdom and revelation*," have the "eyes of their understanding *enlightened*," discern "the riches of the glory of God's inheritance," and "the exceeding greatness of His power;" may be "strengthened with *might* by His Spirit in the inner man," and be "rooted and grounded in *love*."* He prays for the Thessalonians that their "whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved *blameless* unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ;"† that "God which hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, may comfort their hearts, and *stablish* them in every good word and work;"‡ that "the Lord may make them increase and abound in love one toward another, to the end that he may establish their hearts *unblameable* in holiness before God;"§ what a strong word "unblameable" is, "and unblameable *before God*!" This was what He aimed at for them, not that they should be forgiven, but that they should not sin. Again, for the Hebrews, that God would make them *perfect* in every good work to do His will, working in them that which is "well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ."|| In like manner, St. Peter prays for his brethren, that God may "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle them;"¶ and St. Jude exhorts them "building up themselves on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, to *keep themselves* in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," and gives glory to Him "who is *able* to *keep* them from falling," (he does not say to pardon, as if *that* was the end of the Gospel,) and to present them before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Now, considering the number of passages I have quoted, surely it is very remarkable, even before we know what is to be found in other places, even supposing a forgiveness of sins, after the one great forgiveness and like it, is mentioned somewhere, it is very remarkable (I say) that it should not be mentioned in all these. Can we doubt that under the Gospel sins were not to be *expected*, to say the least; and, as far as these passages go, were not *provided* for in it?

But let us turn our thoughts to some more extended passages of

* Eph. i. 17—19; iii. 16, 17. † 1 Thess. v. 23. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

§ 1 Thess. iii. 13.

|| Heb. xiii. 21.

¶ 1 Pet. v. 10.

Scripture. Consider, for instance, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, detached passages of which have already been cited. The whole of it is addressed to Christians; and though there is abundant mention of their blessedness as being such, in various ways, yet the idea of continual forgiveness does not suggest itself as one of their privileges, just as the forgiveness of sins is not mentioned as a privilege to be enjoyed by Saints in heaven, or by the Angels, for they do not need it; in like manner Christians are called from sin unto holiness, and at least ought not to need it. Thus in the fourth and fifth chapters there is a description of the Church in the way of precept which exactly answers to its actual state, as described in history, in the second chapter of the Acts. Christians were to be followers of God as dear children, to walk in love as Christ had loved them, to walk circumspectly, to redeem the time, to be filled with the Spirit, and to be instant in praises and thanksgivings. Greivous crimes *are* mentioned also, and we are warned against them; but how? Does St. Paul for an instant suppose that a Christian, remaining a Christian, can be guilty of them? Does he say, if a Christian is unclean, or covetous, or the like, that of course he must repent indeed and amend, but still that he is safe if he has faith? Far from it; he speaks as if such sins were impossible in Christians; he does not enter into the case of a Christian who has been guilty of them. "For this *ye know*, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, . . . *hath any inheritance* in the kingdom of Christ and God." Therefore the Apostle warns his brethren not to be "*partakers* with the children of disobedience, for they *were* darkness, but *are* light in the Lord," in that Spirit, whose fruit is "goodness, righteousness, and truth," and in that light which detects all that is evil; for the words have been spoken over them, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Now consider, again, the sixth and eighth chapters of the Romans, which are more remarkable because they are in contrast with other parts of the Epistle. In the seventh chapter, St. Paul speaks of a state in which there was no forgiveness also; but of what state? one of spiritual death and despair; our state by *nature*. In it the absence of pardon is the cause of eternal wo, but in the Christian state it is the consequence of the gift of grace. The Apostle declares that there is no condemnation to those who are in the Spirit; why? because "the righteousness of the law *is* fulfilled in them;" how? by "the law of the Spirit of life," or (as he says in the Epistle last quoted) because "the fruit of the Spirit is goodness, righteousness, and truth." Again, in the sixth chapter, which also describes the Christian state, there is not a hint of

forgiveness being a special privilege of a state of grace ; but rather Christians, "being made free from sin," are said to become "the servants of *righteousness*." All this is very different from what the Apostle said in the third chapter, when speaking of our state by nature and justification out of it. There *forgiveness of sins* is dwelt on. It is remarkable that it should *then* be dwelt on, and that it should not afterwards.

Once more, consider the first chapter of St. James's Epistle. There *temptation* is spoken of, as it is by St. Paul in a passage already quoted. St. Paul speaks of it, not as causing us to fall, but as a means of becoming holier. "We *glory* in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh *not ashamed*,"* or as the Psalmist says, "They had an eye unto Him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed ;"†—there is no shame in the Church. Such is St. Paul's view of trial to the Christian ; such is St. James's also ; "My brethren," he says, "count it all *joy* when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience ; and let patience have her perfect work."‡ Then he bids them ask of God wisdom, speaks of good gifts and perfect gifts coming from the Father of Lights, and of pure religion and undefiled ; but not a word of sins to be forgiven : on the contrary, he declares that wilful sin, such as temptations may occasion, is the beginning of a course which "when finished, bringeth forth death ;" whereas the real Christian *overcomes* temptation, or, as St. John says, "overcomes the world," not falls under it. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the *crown of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that *love* Him ;" words which singularly correspond to St. Paul's at the end of his trial, "I *have* fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown* of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that *love* His appearing."§ Moreover, there is this additional remark to be made about St. James's Epistle, that, whereas there are one or two passages in which he addresses, not Christians, but Jews, there he does speak at once of conversion, submission, purification, and approach to God. Now it is not strange he should speak of these things to the unregenerate ; but it is strange he should not also speak of them to Christians, if he contemplated the case of Christians reducing themselves to a state like that of the unregenerate. Since, then, he, as well as the other Apostles, does not treat of an unhappy condition, which now occurs so

* Rom. v. 3—5.

† Ps. xxxi. 5.

‡ James i. 2—4.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

frequently, it is not wonderful that he and they do not give its symptoms, dangers, or remedies, or enlarge, whether upon those judgments or those penitential observances, which, in the case of sinners as yet unregenerate, the Gospel and the Old Testament describe.

However, I observe lastly, there *are* instances of declension both of faith and conduct in the Corinthians and Galatians. St. Paul writes to both. He arraigns and remonstrates with them. Does he give them one hint that if they believe in Christ's atoning power, those particular sins of theirs will be at once remitted?

To sum up, then, and apply what I have said:—When Christians have gone wrong in any way, whether in belief or in practice, scandalously or secretly, it seems that pardon is not explicitly and definitely promised them in Scripture as a matter of course; and the mere fact that they afterwards become better men, and are restored to God's favour, does not decide the question whether they are in every sense pardoned; for David was restored and yet was punished. It is still a question, whether a debt is not standing against them for their past sins, and is now operating or to operate to their disadvantage. What its payment consists in, and how it will be exacted, is quite another question, and a hidden one. It may be such, if they die under it, as to diminish their blessedness in heaven; or it may be a sort of obstacle here to their rising to certain high points of Christian character; or it may be a hindrance to their ever attaining one or other particular Christian grace in perfection,—faith, purity, or humility; or it may prevent religion taking deep root within them and imbuing their minds; or it may make them liable to fall away; or it may hold them back from that point of attainment which is the fulfilment of their trial; or it may forfeit for them the full assurance of hope; or it may lessen their peace and comfort in the intermediate state, or even delay their knowledge there of their own salvation; or it may involve the necessity of certain temporal punishments, grievous bodily disease, or sharp pain, or worldly affliction, or an unhappy death. Such things are “secrets of the Lord our God,”—not to be pried into, but to be acted upon. We are all more or less sinners against His grace, many of us grievous sinners; and St. Paul and the other Apostles give us very scanty information what the consequences are. God may spare us; He may punish. In either case, however, our duty is to surrender ourselves into His hands, that He may do what He will. “It is the Lord,” said pious Eli, when judgment came on him, “let Him do what seemeth Him good.” Only let us beg of Him not to forsake us in our miserable state; to take us up where we are, and make us obey Him under the circumstances into which sin has brought us. Only let us beg of Him to work all repent-

ance and all righteousness in us, for we can do nothing of ourselves, and to enable us to hate sin truly, and confess it honestly, and deprecate His wrath continually, and to undo its effects diligently, and to bear His judgments cheerfully and manfully. Let us beg of Him the spirit of faith and hope, that we may not repine or despond, or account Him a hard master; that we may learn lovingly to adore the hand that afflicts us, and, as it is said, to kiss the rod, however sharply or long it smites us; that we may look on to the end of all things which will not tarry, and to the coming of Christ which will at length save us, and faint not on the rough way, nor toss upon our couch of thorns; in a word, that we may make the words of the text our own, which express all that sinners, repentant and suffering, should feel, whether towards God or towards their tempter. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against Him; until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness."

SERMON VIII.

PEACE AND JOY AMID CHASTISEMENT.

JOB xiii. 15.

Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.

THIS is a sentiment which often occurs in Scripture, whether expressed in words or implied in the conduct of good men. It is founded on the belief that God is our sole strength, our sole refuge; that if good is in any way in store for us, it lies with God; if it is attainable, it is attained by coming to God. Though we be in evil case even after coming to Him, we are sure to be in still worse, if we keep away. If He will but allow sinners such as we are to approach Him, for that is the only

question, then it is our wisdom to approach Him at once in such a way as He appoints or appears to approve. At all events, there is no one else we can go to ; so that if He refuses to receive us, we are undone. And on the other hand, if He does receive us, then we must be ready to submit to His will, whatever it is towards us, pleasant or painful. Whether He punishes or not, or how far pardons, or how far restores, or what gifts He bestows, rests with Him ; and it is our part to take, good or bad, as He gives it.

This is the general feeling which St. Peter seems to express in one way, when he cries out, "Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life." It is the feeling, under different circumstances and in a different tone, of the Prodigal Son, when he said, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto Him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants." It shows itself under the form of peace and joy in the words of David : "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me ;" and it speaks in the text in the mouth of the heavenly afflicted and sorely perplexed Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Inquirers seeking the truth, prodigals repentant, saints rejoicing in the light, saints walking in darkness, all of them have one word on their lips, one creed in their hearts,—to "trust in the Lord for ever, for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

There is another case different from all of these, in which it is equally our duty and wisdom thus to stay ourselves upon God ; that of our being actually under punishment for our sins. Job maintained his innocence, which his friends denied, as thinking his afflictions were a judgment upon some secret wickednesses now coming to light. He, on the other hand, being conscious of his integrity and sincerity in time past, could but wait in the darkness till God revealed why He chastised as a sinner, one who had been "perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil."* But men may often be conscious that they have incurred God's displeasure, and conscious that they are suffering it ; and then their duty is still to trust in God, to acquiesce or rather to concur in His chastisements, as if they were a self-inflicted penance, and not the strokes of His rod. For God is our merciful Father, and when He afflicts His sons, yet it is not willingly ; and though in one sense it is in judgment, yet in another and higher, it is in mercy. He provides that what is in itself an evil should become a good ; and,

* Job i. 1.

while He does not supersede the original law of His just government, that suffering should follow sin, He overrules it to be a healing medicine as well as a punishment. Thus, "in wrath" He "remembers mercy." This St. Paul decides, quoting the words of Solomon, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him; for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."* You see he calls it a "chastisement" and a "rebuke," but still it is in "love;" and it is our duty to take it as such, and to bless and praise Him under it.

And Scripture affords us some remarkable instances of persons glorifying, or called on to glorify God, when under His hand, some of which it may be well here to mention.

One which deserves especial notice is Joshua's exhortation to Achan, who was about to be put to death for secreting a portion of the spoils of Jericho, and was thus dying apparently under the very rod, and, if any man ever, without encouragement to trust in God, or hope of profit in serving Him. "My son," Joshua says to him, "give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him." Thus he began; yet observe, his next words were as severe as if no duty, no consolation, were left to the offender,—despair only. He continues thus sternly, "Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day." "And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire," him "and his sons and his daughters," "after they had stoned them with stones."†

Another remarkable instance is given us in the history of Jonah; I mean, in his address to Almighty God out of the fish's belly. It illustrates most appositely, the case of a true, though erring, servant of God, chastised, yet blessing God under the chastisement, and submitting himself even without any clear prospect how he was to escape from it. "I cried," he says, "by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and Thou heardest my voice. For Thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about; all Thy billows and Thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight: yet I will look again toward thy Holy Temple. . . . When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came in unto thee, into Thine Holy Temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto Thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."‡

Now, one should think, nothing could be more simple to understand

* Heb. xii. 5, 6.

† Josh. vii. 19, 21, 25.

‡ Jonah ii. 2—4, 7—9.

than the state of mind described, however hard it be to realize ; I mean the combined feeling that God loves us yet punishes us, that we are in His favour, yet are under, or may be brought under His rod ; the feeling of mingled hope and fear, of suspense, of not seeing our way, yet having a general conviction that God will bring us on it, if we trust to Him. And this the more so, because very few indeed, or rather none at all, but must be conscious, if they get themselves to think, that they have grievously offended God at various times, in spite of all He has done for them ; and that, for what they know, Christ's merits may not be so imputed to them as to exempt them from some punishment, which will demand in them the feelings I have been describing. Yet so it is, at least in this day, men find a difficulty in conceiving how Christians can have hope without certainty, sorrow and pain without gloom, suspense with calmness and confidence ; how they can believe that in one sense they are in the light of God's countenance, and that in another sense, they have forfeited it. I proceed then to describe a state of mind, which it seems to me no one ought to misunderstand ; it is so much a matter of common sense.

We will say, a man *is* a serious Christian, for of such I am speaking. He is in the habit of prayer ; and he tries to serve God, and he has, through God's mercy, the reward of such a religious course of life. He has a consciousness that God has not given him up ; he has a good hope of heaven. I am not speaking of the strength of it, but more or less a good hope. He does not indeed often realize the circumstances of the future, he does not dwell upon what is to become of him ; but I mean he does not look forward anxiously, feeling, as he does, around him the proofs, in which he cannot be deceived, of God's present love towards him. His being allowed to attend God's ordinances, his being enabled in a measure to do his duty, his perception of Gospel truths, his being able to accept, admire, and love high and holy views of things, all conspire to prove that at present, without going on to speculate or to calculate how he shall fare at Christ's judgment seat, at present he is in a certain true sense in God's favour. The feeling may vary from a mere trembling guess, a mere dawning and doubtful hope, to a calm though subdued confidence ; still, something of this kind is the state of mind of all serious men. They are not in a state of immediate alarm, for the day of judgment is future ; and for the present they are conscious, somehow they are in God's hands as yet, and are thereby supported.

But now suppose a man, (and this is the case of most Christians,) who is conscious of some deliberate sin or sins in time past, some course of sin, or in later life has detected himself in some secret and subtle sin. Supposing it breaks on a man that he has been an over-indulgent

father, and his children have suffered from it ; or that he has been harsh, and so has alienated those who ought to have confided in him ; or that he has been overfond of worldly goods, and now is suddenly overtaken with some grievous fall in consequence ; or that he has on any particular occasions allowed sin in others, when he might have warned them, and they are dead and gone, and the time of retrieving matters is past ; or that he has taken some false step in life, formed connections irreligiously or the like :—what will be his state when the conviction of his sin, whatever it is, breaks upon him ? Will he think himself utterly out of God's favour ? I think not ; he has the consciousness of his present prevailing habits of obedience, in spite of his not being so careful as he ought to be ; he knows he has served God on the whole ; he knows he has really desired to do God's will, though he has not striven as he ought to have done, or has been negligent in some particulars in ascertaining what that will was. Much as he may be shocked at and condemn and hate himself, much as he will humble himself, yet I do not suppose he will ordinarily *despair*. But on the other hand, will he take up a notion that God has forgiven him ? I think not either ; I will not believe he has so little humility, and so much presumption. I am not speaking of ordinary men, who have no fixed principle who take up and lay down religion as it may happen, but of *serious* men ; and I will not lightly impute it to any such man that he takes up the notion of his having been absolutely forgiven for the sins of his past life. Who is to forgive him ? how is he to know it ? No ; I see no certainty for him ; he will be convinced indeed that God has not cast him out of His sight, whatever his sins have been ; for he will argue, “ If I were utterly reprobate, I could have no holy wish at all, or could even attempt any good work.” His outward privileges, his general frame and habit of mind assure him of so much as this ; but as surely his memory tells him that he has had sins upon his conscience ; he has no warrant that they are not there still ; and what has come, what is to come of them, what future consequences they imply, is unknown to him. Thus he is under two feelings at once, not at all inconsistent with each other,—one of present enjoyment, another of undefined apprehension ; and on looking on to the Day of judgment, hope and fear both rise within him.

Further, let us suppose such a one actually brought into trouble, and that evidently resulting from the sin in question. For instance : supposing he has been passionate and violent, or unjust, and suppose some serious annoyance in consequence befalls him from the injured party ; or supposing he has neglected some obvious duty, and now the consequences of that neglect come upon him ; or supposing he has in former years been imprudent in money transactions, and is under the embar-

rassments which they have occasioned. Now here he certainly experiences, with a clearness which he cannot explain away, a double aspect of God's providence towards him ; for he sees His love and fatherly affection plainly enough, in the opportunity he still has of attending God's ordinances, and in the inward evidences of that faith, obedience, and peace, which can come from God only ; on the other hand, he sees His displeasure as plainly in the visitation which comes upon him from without. I know it is sometimes said, that such trials are to the true Christian not judgments but corrections ; rather they are judgments *and* corrections ; surely they are merciful corrections, but they are judgments too. It is impossible but a man must consider (for example) undutiful children a punishment on him for having once neglected them, or penury a judgment on him for past extravagance, whatever may be his present attainments in obedience, greater or less ; whatever his hope that God is still gracious to him in spite of it ; whatever be his duty and his ability to turn it into a blessing. It is against common sense to say otherwise. In spite, then, of the doctrine now popular, that "as to past sin, it is over, God has forgiven it," really I do not think any truly serious lowly Christian of himself will think so, will of himself say so, though many are betrayed into such a way of speaking from want of seriousness, and many because others use it. God has not absolutely forgiven the sin past ; here is a proof He has not,—He is punishing it. It will be said, He has forgiven it as to its eternal consequences. Where is the proof of this ? all we see is, that He is punishing it. If we argue from what we see, He has not forgiven it at all. Here a man will say, "How can He be gracious to me in other ways, unless He has been gracious so as to forgive ? Is not forgiveness the first step in grace ?" It *was* when we were baptized ; whether it is so since must be decided from Scripture. Certainly, if we go by what our reason tells us, (and I insist on what reason would say, not as if I thought Scripture spoke differently, but because persons often seem to have a great difficulty in understanding what is meant by saying that God should both be gracious to us yet not have absolutely forgiven us,) I say nothing is more compatible with reason, judging from our experience of life, than that we should have God's present favour and help without full pardon for the past. Supposing, for instance, a child has disobeyed us, and in disobeying has met with an accident. Do we at once call him to account ? and not rather wait a while, till he is in a fit state to be spoken to, and when we can better decide whether or no what has befallen him be a sufficient punishment ? We pass the fault over for the present, and act towards him as if we had no cause to be displeased. This is one instance out of a thousand which occur in daily life of our treating kindly

may loving persons, with whom we are dissatisfied, and mean one day to expostulate. Surely, then, the two ideas are quite separate, of putting aside what is past and of showing kindness at present. Of course, the instance referred to is not an exact parallel to our own state in God's sight; no exact parallel can be found. We do not even know what is meant by saying, that God, who sees the end from the beginning, pardons at one time rather than another. We can but take divine truth as it is given us. We know there is one time at least when He pardons persons whom He foresees will afterwards fall away and perish; I mean, the time of Baptism. He desires the salvation of those who ultimately come short of it. It does not follow, then, because He is still gracious to us, enables us to serve Him, and makes us love Him, that therefore we have no arrears of obedience, no debt of punishment, to be brought into account against us, when He visits. And so far from its being strange that we are in this double state in His sight, and ought to have these mingled feelings towards Him, rather it is too reasonable not to assent to it unless Scripture says the contrary.

But, it may be said, Scripture does say the contrary; it declares that all who repent shall be forgiven. Doubtless; but what is repentance? is repentance the work of a day? is it a mere word? is it enough to say, "I am sorry?" Consider the different frames of mind we are in hour by hour; how much we feel at one time which we do not at another. What degree or kind of feeling is enough? Considering how our hearts deceive us, is even the most passionate feeling to be trusted? Did not the Son in the Parable say, "I go, sir," and went not? Do you suppose that he meant to go, or did not mean, when he so promised? did he not think he was in earnest when he was not? If indeed we feel distress at having sinned, let us give God the praise; it shows that He is pleading with our hearts, it shows that He wishes us to repent, that He is bringing us to repentance; but it does not show that we have duly repented, and that He actually has forgiven us.

But it may be said, that Scripture says that faith will apply to us the merits of Christ, and thus become the instrument of washing away sins. I do not know where Scripture so says; but even if it did, I suppose it would not speak of every kind of faith, but of living faith. But how is living faith ascertained? by works;—now, who will maintain that his works can be such as to bring home to him an undoubted assurance, that he has a faith able to do this great thing?

But again, a person may say, "I have a conviction I have this faith; I feel I have; I feel I can appropriate the merits of Christ." Or again, "I have an assurance that I am forgiven." True; but where does Scripture tell us that such an assurance, without grounds for it

beyond our feeling it, comes from God? where is it promised? till it is found then, we must be content not to be sure, and to fear and hope about ourselves at once.

But it may be said again, that we are told, "Ask, and ye shall receive;" if then we ask for pardon, we are pardoned. It is true; but where is it said that we shall gain it by once asking? on the contrary, are we not expressly told that we must come again and again, that we must "wait on the Lord," that we must "continue in prayer," that we must "pray and not faint," that we must be importunate in our supplications, though God seems as though He hears us not? It is quite true that if we persevere in prayer for pardon through our lives, that in spite of God's not sensibly answering, we shall at length obtain it; but this is the very state of mingled hope and fear, of peace and anxiety, of grace and of insecurity, which I have been describing. Surely, no words can express better such a waiting and persevering temper, than the words of the text, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Once more, it may be said, and this is a far better answer than any that I have hitherto noticed, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper imparts to us forgiveness, and assures us of it. The benefits imparted to our souls by this Holy Sacrament are indeed most high and manifold; but that the absolute forgiveness of our past sins is not one of them, is plain in our Church's judgment from the Confession in the Service, indeed from all our Confessions. We there say, that "the remembrance of our sins is grievous, and the burden intolerable;"—now does our "remembrance" only carry us back to those sins which we have committed since we last came to this blessed ordinance, and not rather those into which we have fallen from our earliest years? and if so, is not this to confess that we are not sure of their pardon? else why are they a "burden?" Again: "for Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake forgive us all that is past;" our past sins then are not forgiven when we thus pray; does not that "past" extend back through our whole life up to infancy? If so, up to the day of our death, up to the last awful celebration of this Blessed Sacrament in our sick chamber, we confess that our sins all through our life are unforgiven, whatever be the effect, which we know cannot be little, of the grace of that Ordinance and the Absolution then pronounced over us.

To these considerations I will add one other. We are to be *judged* at the Last Day, and "receive the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad."* Our sins will then be had in remembrance; therefore they are not forgiven here.

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

It seems clear, then, that the sins which we commit here, are not put away here,—are not put away absolutely and once for all, but are in one sense upon us till the Judgment. There is indeed one putting away of sins expressly described in Scripture, which we all received from God's mercy, when, though "born in sin, and the children of wrath," we were "made the children of grace." This was in Baptism, which accordingly is called in the Creed, the "One Baptism for the remission of sins." And of this great absolution Scripture speaks in many ways, calling on those who have not received it to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away their sins;" declaring there is "a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness;" and promising that "though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."* This all we have received long since; and none knows but God and His Angels,—nay, I will say, none knows but God Himself, and His Only Son, and His Spirit who then is present,—how much Holy Baptism does secretly for our souls, what hidden wounds it heals, and what inbred corruption it allays; but this is past long since. We have sinned in spite of grace then given; many of us grievously; and the question now is, where do we stand, and *how* are we to gain a second pardon?

I answer, we stand in God's presence, we are in His Church, in His favour, in the way of His grace, in the way to be pardoned; and this is our great comfort on the very first view of the matter. We are not in a desperate state, we are not cast out of our Father's house; we have still privileges, aids, powers, from Him. And this being the case, through God's great mercy, it is quite clear what our duty is, even if Scripture gave us no insight into it. Even if Scripture said nothing of the duty of importunate prayer and patient waiting, in order to obtain that which we need so much, yet our natural sense must suggest it to us. See what our condition is;—at present most happily circumstanced, in the bosom of God's choicest gifts; but with evil behind us, and that through our frailty ever increasing, and a judgment before us. Why, it is plainly our duty to make the most of our time of grace; to be earnest and constant in deprecating God's wrath; to do all we can to please Him; to bring Him of our best, not as if it had any intrinsic desert, but because it is our best; to endeavour so to cherish and bring to fruit the gifts of His grace within us, that, "when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations;" and since He at present condescends to work in us "to will and to do," to aim, as St. Paul directs, at "work.

* Acts xxii. 16. Zech. xiii. 1. Isaiah i. 18.

ing out our own salvation with fear and trembling," working while it is day, "before the night cometh," for "now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Though we be at present punished for our sins, though we be under judgment, or if it be in prospect, though we be uncertain more or less how things will be with us, though the adversary of our souls accuse us before God, though his threatening voice sounds in our ears year after year, though we feel the load of our sins and cannot throw them from our memory, nay, though it should be God's will that even to the Day of judgment no assurance should be given us, still, wherever we are, and whatever we are, like Jonah "in the belly of hell," with Job among the ashes, with Jeremiah in the dungeon, or like the Holy Children in the flames, let us glorify our Lord God, and trust in Him, and praise Him, and magnify Him for ever. Let us take in good part whatever sorrow He inflicts in His providence, or however long. Let us "glorify the Lord in the fires;"* they may circle us, but they cannot really touch us; they may threaten, but they are as yet restrained. "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." We will sing and praise His name. When two or three are gathered together, an interior temple, a holy shrine is formed for them, which nothing without can destroy. We will not cease to rejoice in what God has given, because He has not as yet promised us every thing. Nor will we on the other hand forget our past sins, because He allows us peace and joy in spite of them. We will remember them, that He may not remember them; we will repent of them again and again, that He may forgive them; we will rejoice in the punishment of them, if He punishes, thinking it better to be punished in this life than in the next; and if not yet punished, we will be prepared for the chance of it. He will give us grace according to our day, according to His gracious promise: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."†

* Isaiah xxiv. 15.

† Isaiah xliii. 1, 2

SERMON IX.

THE STATE OF GRACE.

ROMANS v. 1, 2.

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

THERE are many men, nay, the greater part of a Christian country, who have neither hope nor fear about futurity or the unseen world ; they do not think of it at all, or bring the idea of it home to them in any shape. They do not really understand, or try to understand, that they are in God's presence, and must one day be judged for what they are now doing ; any more than they see what is going on in another quarter of the world, or concern themselves about what is to happen to them ten years hence. The next world is far more distant from them than any future period of this life or any other country ; and consequently, they have neither hope nor fear about it, for they have no thought about it of any kind.

There are others who feel no fear whatever, though they profess to feel much joy and transport. I cannot sympathize with such, nor do I think St. Paul would, for he bids us "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling ;" nor St. Peter, who bids us "pass the time of our sojourning here in fear."*

But there are others who seem only to fear, or to have very little joy in religion. These are in a more hopeful state than those who only joy and do not fear at all ; yet they are not altogether in a right state. However, they are in an interesting state. I purpose to describe it now, and to make some remarks upon it.

It is certainly the duty, as it is the privilege, of every Christian to have his heart so fixed on Christ as to desire His coming ; yet, alas ! it

* Phil. ii. 12. 1 Pet. i. 17.

too often happens that when we say, "Thy kingdom come," our sins rise up before our minds, and make our words falter. Now the persons I speak of are in so sad and uncomfortable a state of mind, as to be distressed whenever they think of the next world. They may be well-living serious persons, and have ever been such from their youth ; yet they have an indefinite sense of guilt on their minds, a consciousness of their own miserable failings and continual transgressions, such as annoys and distresses them, as a wound or sore might, when they think of Christ's coming in judgment. A sense of guilt, indeed, every one, the best of us, must have. I am not blaming *that*, but I speak of *such* a sense as hinders those who feel it from rejoicing in the Lord. They have one thought alone before their minds, the great irregularity of their lives ; they come to Church, and try to attend, but their thoughts wander ; the day passes, and it seems to them unprofitable. They have done God no service. Or again, they have some natural failing which breaks out from time to time, and grievously afflicts them on recollection. Perhaps they are passionate and are ever saying what they are sorry for afterwards ; or they are ill-tempered, and from time to time put every thing about them into confusion, and make every one unhappy by their gloomy looks and sullen words ; or they are slothful, and with difficulty moved to do any thing, and they are ever lamenting wasted hours and opportunities lost. The consequence is that their religion is a course of sorrowful attempting and failing, self-reproach, and dryness of spirits. They are deeply sensible how good God is, and how wonderful His providence ; they really feel very grateful, and they really put their trust where it should be put. But their faith only leads them to see that judgment is a fearful thing, and their sense of God's mercies to say, "How little grateful am I." They hear of the blessings promised to God's true servants after death, and they say, "Oh, how unprepared am I to receive them."

Now no one will fancy, I should trust, that I am saying any thing in disparagement of such feelings ; they are very right and true. I only say they should not be the whole of a man's religion. He ought to have other and more cheerful feelings too. No one on earth is free from imperfection and sin, no one but has much continually to repent of, yet St. Paul bids us "rejoice in the Lord alway ;" and in the text, he describes Christians as having peace with God and rejoicing in hope of His glory. Sins of infirmity, then, such as arise from the infection of our original nature, and not from deliberation and wilfulness, have no divine warrant to keep us from joy and peace in believing.

Now, then, the question is, *how* the persons in question come to have this defective kind of religion.

1. In the first place, of course, we must take into account bodily dis-

order, which is not unfrequently the cause of the perplexity of mind I have been describing. Many persons have an anxious self-tormenting disposition, or depression of spirits, or deadness of the affections in consequence of continued or peculiar ill health; and, though it is their study, as it is their duty, to strive against this evil as much as they can, yet it often may be impossible to be rid of it. Of course, in such cases we can impute no fault to them. It is God's will: He has willed in His inscrutable purpose that they should not be able to rejoice in the Gospel, doubtless for their ultimate good, to try and prove them; as any thing else may be a trial, as ill-health itself is such. They should not repine. It is an undeserved mercy that they have the Gospel brought near to them at all, that they have the prospect of heaven, be it faint or distinct; and they must be patient under their fears, and try to serve God more strictly.

2. But, again, the uncomfortable state of mind I have described sometimes, it is to be feared, arises, I will not say from wilful sin, but from some habitual deficiency which might be corrected, but is not. It is very difficult of course to draw the line between sins which are (as it were) the direct consequences of our old nature, and those which are more strictly and entirely our own, yet there is a class which rises above the former, though it would be harsh to call them wilful. The sins I speak of arise partly through frailty, partly through want of love; and they seem just to have this effect, of dimming or quenching our peace and joy. Such, for instance, are recurring and stated acts of sin, such as might be foreseen and provided against. Anger, on the contrary, may overtake a man when he least expects it. Indolence may show itself in a difficulty or inability to fix his mind on the subject which ought to occupy it, so that time goes and nothing is done. Ill-temper may fall upon him like a spell, and bind his faculties, so that his very attempts to break it may make him seem more gloomy, untoward, and disagreeable, from the appearance of an effort and struggle. Such need not be more than sins of infirmity. But there are sins which happen at certain times or places, and which a man ought to prepare for, and overcome. I do not say that he must overcome them this time or that, but he must be in a state of warfare against them, and must be tending to overcome them. Such, for instance, is indolence in rising from his bed. Such, again, is a careless, irregular, or hurried way of saying private prayer. Such is any habitual excess in eating or drinking. Such is running into temptation,—going again and again to places, or among people, who will induce him to do what he should not, to idle, or to jest, or to talk much. Such is extravagance in spending money. All these laxities of conduct impress upon

our conscience a vague sense of irregularity and guilt. The absence of a vigilant walk, of exact conscientiousness in all things, of an earnest and vigorous warfare against our spiritual enemies, in a word, of strictness, this is what obscures our peace and joy. Strictness is the condition of rejoicing. The Christian is a soldier ; he may have many falls ; these need not hinder his joy in the Gospel ; he must be humbled indeed, but not downcast ; it does not prove he is not fighting ; he has enemies within and without him ; he has the remains of a fallen nature. But wilful sin in any shape proves that he is not an honest soldier of Christ. If it is habitual and deliberate, of course it destroys his hope ; but if it be less than deliberate, and yet of the nature of wilful sin, it is sufficient, though not (we trust) to separate him at once from Christ, yet to separate him from the inward vision of Him. The same result will follow, perhaps irremediably, where men have been in past life open or habitual sinners, though they may now have repented. Penitents cannot hope to be as cheerful and joyful in faith as those who have never fallen away from God ; perhaps it is not desirable they should be, and is a bad sign if they are. I do not mean to say that in the course of years, and after severe humiliation, it is not possible for a repentant sinner to feel a well-grounded peace and comfort, but he must not expect it. He must expect to be haunted with the ghosts of past sins, rising from the charnel-house, courting him to sin again, yet filling him the while with remorse ; he must expect "a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind,"* misgivings about his safety, misgivings about the truth of religion, and about particular doctrines, painful doubts and difficulties, so that he is forced to grope in darkness, or in cold and dreary twilight. I do not say there are not ways of escaping all this misery at a moment, but they are false ways ; but if he continues in the true and narrow way, he will find it rough and painful ; and this is his fit correction.

3. Again, where there is no room for supposing the existence of wilful sins, past or present, this fearful anxious state of mind arises very commonly from another cause in one shape or another—from not having a lively sense of our present privileges ; and this is the subject to which I shall call your attention. Many indeed, finding that Scripture says great things about the joy which true Christians have in the Gospel, think it consists in their having personally and individually an assurance of their absolute predestination to eternal life ; or at least of their being now in a state of salvation, such that, were they at once to die, they would be sure of heaven. Such a knowledge of course would

* Deut. xxviii. 65.

inspire great joy if they had it; and they fancy that the joy of the Christian does arise from it. But since they have it not, and only think they have it, it is obvious what extravagances will follow from the notion instead of real benefit? what perversion of the Gospel, what rashness, presumption, self-exaltation, and intemperate conduct. Such persons of course claim the more consolatory parts of Scripture, such as the text, for themselves. They forcibly take them from more sober Christians, as if they were their own, and others had no right to them, nay, as if others had no right to explain them, to comment on them, or to have an opinion about them; as if they alone could understand them, or feel them, or appreciate them, or use them. What is the consequence? better men are robbed of their portion; their comfortable texts are gone, they acquiesce in the notion (too readily) that these texts are *not* theirs; not that they exactly allow that they belong to the enthusiastic persons who claim them, but they think they belong to no one at all, that they belonged indeed to St. Paul and to inspired or highly gifted men but to no one now.

And this conclusion is strengthened by the circumstance that men of duller and less sensitive minds are willing to give them up. There are persons, highly respectable indeed, and serious, but whose religion is of a dry and cold character, with little heart or insight into the next world. They have strong sense and regular habits; their passions are not violent, their feelings not quick, and they have no imagination or restless reason to run away with their thoughts or to perplex them. They do not grieve much or joy much. They do joy and grieve, but it is in a way, in a certain line, and not the highest. They are most excellent men in their line, but they do not walk in a lofty path. There is nothing unearthly about them; they cannot be said to be worldly, yet they do not walk by things unseen; they do not discern and contemplate the next world. They are not on the alert to detect, patient in watching, keen-sighted in tracing the movements of God's secret Providence. They do not feel they are in an immense unbounded system with a height above and a depth beneath. They think every thing is plain and easy, they have no difficulties in religion, they see no recondite and believe in no hidden meanings in Scripture, and discern no hints there sympathetic with guesses within them. Such men are used to explain away such passages as the text; to be "at peace with God," to "have access into the grace in which we stand," to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God,"—to them have little or no meaning. Their joy does not rise higher than what they call a "rational faith and hope, a satisfaction in religion, a cheerfulness, a well-ordered mind, and the like,"—all very good words, if properly used, but shallow to express the fulness of the Gospel privileges.

What with the enthusiastic, then, on the one hand, who pervert the texts in question, and with the barren-minded on the other, who explain them away, Christians are commonly left without the texts at all, and so have nothing to contemplate but their own failings; and these surely are numerous enough, and fit to make them dejected.

Observe, then, what religion becomes to them; a system of duties with little of privilege or comfort. Not that any one would have cause to complain (God forbid!) though it had no privilege; for what can sinners claim, to whom it is a great gain to be respited from hell? Not that religion can really be without privilege; for the very leave to serve God is a privilege, the very thought of God is a privilege, the very knowledge that Christ has so loved the world as to die for it is an inestimable privilege. Religion is full of privileges, involved in the very notion of it, and drawn out on the right hand and on the left as a man walks along the path of duty. He cannot stir this way or that, but he awakens some blessed and consoling thought which cheers and strengthens him insensibly, even if it does not so present itself to him, that he can contemplate and feed upon it. However, in the religious system I speak of, the privilege of obedience is concealed, and the bare duty prominently put forward; the privileges are made vague and general, rather than personal; and thus a man is almost reduced to the state of natural religion, in which God's Law is known without His Gospel. Under such circumstances, religion becomes little more than a code of morals, the word and will of an absent God who will one day come to judge and recompense, not the voice of a present and bountiful Saviour. And this may in one sense be called a bondage,—a bondage, yet without thereby disparaging the excellence and perfection of God's law. Men at this day so boldly talk of the bondage of the law, that, if you heard them, you would think that the being under that law was in itself a misery or an inferior state, as if obedience to God's commandments were something low and second best. But is it really so? then are the Angels in a very low state. The highest blessedness of any creature is to be under the law, the highest glory is obedience. It is our shame, not our privilege, that we do not obey as the Angels do. Men speak as if the Gospel were glorious because it destroyed the law of obedience. No; it destroyed the Jewish law, but not the holy law of God therein contained and manifested. And if that Holy Word, which "endureth for ever in heaven," which is co-eternal with God, is a bondage to us, as it is by nature, so much the more shame for us. It is our great sinfulness, not any inherent defect in the law which makes it a bondage; and the message of the Gospel is glorious, not because it releases us from the law, but because it enables us to fulfil it,—fulfil it (I do not say wholly and perfectly,) but with a con-

tinual approximation to perfect obedience, with an obedience running on into perfection, and which in the next world will rise and result in perfection. This is St. Paul's account of it, "Being not without law to God," he says, "but under the law to Christ."* Again, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law," that is, that kind of obedience to the law to which he *by himself* attained, "but that which is through the faith of Christ,"† that high and spiritual obedience which faith in Christ, aided by the grace of Christ, enabled him to accomplish. And in another place, "the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. . . . The Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. . . . The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." And again, "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."‡

When then I say that religion, considered as a law or code of morals, is a bondage, let no one suppose me to countenance that presumptuous and unchristian spirit, which seems to exult in being free (as it thinks) from the law through Christ, instead of being bound and able through Christ to obey it more perfectly. The glory of the Gospel is, not that it *destroys* the law, but that it makes it *cease to be* a bondage; not that it gives us freedom *from* it, but *in* it; and the notion of the Gospel which I have been describing as cold and narrow, is, not that of supposing Christianity a law, but of supposing it to be scarcely more than a law, and thus leaving us where it found us. He who thinks it but a law, will of course be fearful and miserable. The commandment of God will seem true, but to him, a helpless sinner, hard and uninviting; and though it is still his duty to try to obey, and he will do so, if he be Christ's in heart, yet he will do so sadly and sorrowfully, his memory continually embittered, and his conscience laden with fresh and fresh sins. Two thoughts alone will be before him, God's perfections and his sinfulness; and he will feel love and gratitude indeed to his Almighty Lord and Saviour, but not joy. He will look upon the message of the Gospel as a series of *conditions*. He will consider the Gospel as a *covenant*, in which he must do his part, and God will assuredly do His. Now, salvation, doubtless, *is* conditional, and the Gospel *is* a covenant.

* 1 Cor. ix. 21.

† Phil. iii. 9.

‡ Rom. viii. 3, 4.

These words are as good and as true as the word "law;" but then salvation is not *merely* conditional, nor the Gospel *merely* a covenant; and those who think so, unless they have peculiarly happy minds, will obey in a certain dry, dull, heavy way, without spring, animation, life, vigour, and nobleness. And if possessed of sensitive, gentle, affectionate minds, they will be very likely to sink into despondency and fear. And they are the prey or the mockery of every proud, self-confident boaster, who passes by on the other side, boldly proclaiming himself to be elect and safe, and possessed of a joyful assurance; and every one else who does not make as venturesome a profession as he, to be carnal and a slave of Satan, or at least in a state far, far below himself.

What then is it, that these little ones of Christ lack, who without wilful sin, past or present, on their consciences, are in gloom and sorrow? What is the doctrine that will quicken them, and make their devotion healthy? What will brace them, and nerve them, and make them lift their heads, and will pour light and joy upon their countenance till it shines like the face of Moses when he came down from the Mount? What but the great and high doctrines connected with the Church? They are not merely taken into covenant with God; they are taken into His Church. They have not merely the promise of grace; they have its presence. They have not merely the conditional prospect of a reward; for a blessing, nay, unspeakable, fathomless, illimitable, infinite, eternal blessings are poured into their very heart, as a very first step and an earnest from God our Saviour, what He will do for those who love Him. They "are passed from death unto life," and are the children of God and heirs of heaven. Let us steadily contemplate this comfortable view, and we shall gain strength, and feel cheerful and joyful in spite of our sins. O fearful follower of Christ, how is it thou hast never thought of what thou art and what is in thee? Art thou not Christ's purchased possession? Has He not rescued thee from the devil, and put a new nature within thee? Did He not in Baptism cast out the evil spirit and enter into thee Himself, and dwell in thee as if thou hadst been an Archangel, or one of the Seraphim who worship before Him continually? Much and rightly as thou thinkest of thy sins, hast thou no thought, I do not say of gratitude, but of wonder, of admiration, of amazement, of awful and overpowering transport, at what thou art through grace? When Jacob woke in the morning, his first thought was not about his sins or his danger, though he rightly felt both, but about God;—he said, "How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."* Contemplate then thyself, not in thyself, but as

* Gen. xxviii. 17.

thou art in the Eternal God. Fall down in astonishment at the glories which are around thee and in thee, poured to and fro in in such a wonderful way that thou art (as it were) dissolved into the kingdom of God, and art as if thou hadst nought to do but to contemplate and feed upon that great vision. This surely is the state of mind the Apostle speaks of in the text, when he reminds us who are justified and at peace with God, that we have access to His royal courts, and stand in His grace, and rejoice in hope of His glory. All the trouble which the world inflicts upon us, and which flesh cannot but feel, sorrow, pain, care, bereavement, these avail not to disturb the tranquillity and the intensity with which faith gazes upon the Divine Majesty. All the necessary exactness of our obedience, the anxiety about failing, the pain of self-denial, the watchfulness, the zeal, the self-chastisements which we practise, no more interfere with this vision of faith, than if they were practised by another, not by ourselves. We are two or three selves at once, in the wonderful structure of our minds, and can weep while we smile, and labour while we meditate.

And if so much is given us by the first Sacrament of the Church, what, think we, is given us in the second? O, my brethren, let us raise and enlarge our notions of Christ's Presence in that mysterious ordinance, and we shall understand how it is that the Christian, in spite of his infirmities, and not forgetting them, still may rejoice here "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." For what is it that is vouchsafed to us at the Holy Table, when we commemorate the Lord's death? It is "Jesus Christ before our eyes evidently set forth, crucified among us."* Not before our bodily eyes; so far, every thing remains at the end of that Heavenly Communion as it did at the beginning. What was bread remains bread, and what was wine remains wine. We need no carnal, earthly, visible miracle to convince us of the Presence of the Lord Incarnate. We have, we trust, more faith than to need to see the heavens open, or the Holy Ghost descend in bodily shape,—more faith than to attempt, in default of sight, to indulge our reason, and to confine our notion of the Sacrament to some clear assemblage of words of our own framing. We have faith and love, in St. Paul's words, to "*discern* the Lord's Body." He who is at the right hand of God, manifests Himself in that Holy Sacrament as really and fully as if He were visibly there. We are allowed to draw near, to "give, take, and eat" His sacred Body and Blood, as truly as though like Thomas we could touch His hands and thrust our hand into His side. When He ascended into the Mount, "His face did shine as the sun, and His rai-

* Gal. iii. 1.

ment was white as the light.”* Such is the glorious presence which faith sees in the Holy Communion, though everything looks as usual to the natural man. Not gold or precious stones, pearls of great price or gold of Ophir, are to the eye of faith so radiant as those lowly elements which He, the Highest, is pleased to make the means of conveying to our hearts and bodies His own gracious self. Not the light of the sun sevenfold is so awfully bright and overpowering, if we could see as the Angels do, as that seed of eternal life, which by eating and drinking we lay up in our hearts against the day of his coming. In spite then of all recollections of the past or fear for the future, we have a present source of rejoicing ; whatever comes, weal or wo, however stands our account as yet in the books against the Last Day, this we have and this we may glory in : the present power and grace of God in us and over us, and the good hope thence flowing of victory in the end.

Such are the thoughts which both fill the heart with joy, yet without tending thereby to relax our obedience, for a reason already mentioned, viz. that *strictness* of life, exact conscientiousness, is the tenure of these privileges. They are ours to possess, that is our glory ; they are ours to lose, that is our solicitude. We can keep them, we have not to gain them,—but we shall not keep them without fear and trembling ; still we *have* them, and there is nothing to hinder our rejoicing in them while we have them. For fear is of the future ; and that we *may* lose them to-morrow, (which God forbid,) but supposing it, is no reason why we should not rejoice in them to-day.

* Matt. xvii. 2.

SERMON X.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH FOR THE SAKE OF THE ELECT.

2 TIMOTHY ii. 10.

I endure all things for the elect's sake; that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

IF we were asked what was the object of Christian preaching, teaching, and instruction, what the office of the Church, considered as the dispenser of the word of God, I suppose we should not all return the same answer. Perhaps we might say that the object of Revelation was to enlighten and enlarge the mind, to make us act by reason, and to expand and strengthen our powers;—or to impart knowledge about religious truth, knowledge being power directly it was given, and at once enabling us to think, judge, and act for ourselves;—or to make us good members of the community, loyal subjects, orderly and useful in our station, whatever it be;—or to secure, what otherwise could not be, our leading a religious life; the reason why persons go wrong, throw themselves away, follow bad courses and lose their character, being, that they have had no education, that they are ignorant. These and other answers might be given; some beside, and some short of the mark. It may be useful then to consider with what end, with what expectation we preach, teach, instruct, discuss, bear witness, praise, and blame; what fruit the Church is right in anticipating as the result of her ministerial labours.

St. Paul gives us a reason in the text different from any of those which I have mentioned. He laboured more than all the Apostles; and why? not to civilize the world, not to smooth the face of society, not to facilitate the movements of civil government, not to spread abroad knowledge, not to cultivate the reason, not for any great worldly object, but “for the elect’s sake.” He “endured all things,” all pain, all sorrow, all solitariness; many a tear, many a pang, many a fear, many a disappointment, many a heartache, many a strife, many a wound; he was “five times scourged, thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice in shipwreck, in journeys often, in perils of waters, of robbers, of

his own countrymen, of the heathen, of the city, of the wilderness, of the sea, of false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness ;” * and some men could have even been content so to have suffered, had they by these voluntary acts of suffering been buying as by coin, first one and then another triumph of the Gospel. If every stripe was a sinner’s ransom, and every tear restored a backslider, and every disappointment was balanced with a joy, and every privation of his was another’s edification, then he might have gladly endured all things, knowing that the more he suffered the more he did. And to a certain degree this effect certainly followed : the jailor after his scourging at Philippi, was converted, and washed his stripes ; and his “ bonds in Christ ” were “ manifest ” at Rome, “ in all the palace, and in all other places.” † In spite, however, of such gracious compensations vouchsafed him from time to time, though “ the grace that was bestowed on him was not in vain,” still great visible effects, adequate to the extent of his suffering, were neither its result nor its motive. He sowed in abundance that he might reap in measure ; he spoke to the many that he might gain the few ; he mixed with the world that he might build up the Church ; he endured all things,” not for the sake of all men, but “ for the elect’s sake,” that he might be the means of bringing them to glory. This is instanced of him and the other Apostles in the book of Acts. Thus when St. Peter first preached the Gospel, on the day of Pentecost, “ they were all amazed,” some “ mocked,” but “ they that gladly received the word were baptized.” And when St. Paul and St. Barnabas preached at Antioch to the Gentiles, “ As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.” ‡ When St. Paul preached at Athens “ some mocked,” others said, “ We will hear thee again,” but certain men clave unto him.” And when he addressed the Jews at Rome, “ some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.” Such was the view, which animated, as Christ Himself, so all His Apostles, and St. Paul in particular, to preach to all, in order to succeed with some. Our Lord “ saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied.” St. Paul, as His servant and instrument, was satisfied in like manner to endure all things for the elect’s sake ; or, as he says in another place, “ I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” || And such is the office of the Church in every nation where she sojourns ; she attempts much, she expects and promises little.

This is a great Scripture truth which in this busy and sanguine day needs insisting upon. There are in every age a certain number of souls

* 2 Cor. xi. 24—27. † Phil. i. 13.

‡ Acts ii. 12, 13 ; xiii. 48 ; xvii. 32—34.

|| 1 Cor. ix. 22.

in the world, known to God, unknown to us, who will obey the Truth when offered to them, whatever be the mysterious reason that they do and others do not. These we must contemplate, for these we must labour, these are God's special care, for these are all things; of these and among these we must pray to be, and our friends with us, at the last day. They are the true Church, ever increasing in number, ever gathering in, as time goes on; with them lies the Communion of Saints; they have power with God; they are His armies who follow the Lamb, who overcome princes of the earth, and who shall hereafter judge Angels. These are they who began to be in St. Paul's day, for whom he laboured, being one of them himself; for whom we in our day must labour too, that, if so be, we may become of them also; according to the text, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; or he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."*

God is neither "without witness" nor without fruit, even in a heathen country:—"In every nation," says St. Peter, "he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."† In every nation among many bad, there are some good; and what nations are before the Gospel is offered to them, such they seem to remain on the whole after the offer; "many are called, few are chosen." And to spend and be spent upon the many called for the sake of the chosen few, seems to be the office of Christian teachers and witnesses.

That their office is such, seems to be evident from the existing state of Christian countries from the first. Unless it be maintained that the Church has never done her duty towards the nations where she has sojourned, it must be granted that success in the hearts of the many is not promised her. Christianity has raised the tone of morals, has restrained the passions, and enforced external decency and good conduct in the world at large; it has advanced men in virtuous or religious habits, who otherwise might have been imbued with the mere rudiments of truth and holiness; it has given a firmness and consistency to religious profession in numbers, and perhaps has extended the range of really religious practice. Still on the whole the great multitude of men have to all appearance remained, in a spiritual point of view, no better than before. The state of great cities now is not so very different from what it was of old; or at least not so different as to show that the main work of Christianity has lain with the face of society, or

* Matt. x. 41, 42.

† Acts x. 35.

what is called the world. Again, the highest class in the community and the lowest, are not so different from what they would be respectively without the knowledge of the Gospel, as to allow it to be said that Christianity has succeeded with the world, *as* the world, in its several ranks and classes. And so of its professions and pursuits; they are in character what they were, softened or restrained in their worst tendencies, but still with the same substantial fruits. Trade is still avaricious, not in tendency only but in fact, though it has heard the Gospel; physical science is still sceptical as it was when heathen. Lawyers, soldiers, farmers, politicians, courtiers, nay, shame to say, the priesthood, still savour of the old Adam. Christian states move forward upon the same laws as before, and rise and fall, as time goes on, upon the same internal principles. Human nature remains what it was, though it has been baptized; the proverbs, the satires, the pictures of which it was the subject in heathen times, have their point still. In a word, taking religion to mean, as it well may, the being bound by God's law, the acting under God's will instead of our own, how few are there in a country called Christian who even profess religion in this sense! how few there are who live by any other rule than that of their own ease, habit, inclination, as the case may be, on the one hand, and of external circumstances on the other! with how few is the will of God an habitual object of thought, or search, or love, or obedience! All this is so notorious that unbelievers taunt us with it. They see, and scoff at seeing, that Christians, whether the many or the educated, or the old, nay, or the sacred ministry, are open to the motives, and unequal to the temptations which prevail with human nature generally.

The knowledge of the Gospel then has not materially changed more than the surface of things; it has made clean the outside; but as far as we have the means of judging, it has not acted on a large scale upon the mind within, upon that "heart" out of which proceed the evil things "which defile a man." Nor did it ever promise it would do so. Our Saviour's words, spoken of the Apostles in the first instance, relate to the Church at large,—*"I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine."* In like manner St. Paul says that Christ came, not to convert the world, but *"to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;"* not to sanctify this evil world, but to *"deliver us out of this present evil world according to the will of God and our Father;"** not to turn the whole earth into a heaven, but to bring down a heaven upon earth. This has been the real triumph of the Gospel, to raise those beyond themselves and beyond human nature, in whatever rank and condition of life, whose wills

* John xvii. 9. Tit. ii. 14. Gal. i. 4.

mysteriously co-operate with God's grace, who, while God visits them, really fear and really obey God, whatever be the unknown reason why one man obeys Him and another not. It has made men saints, and brought into existence specimens of faith and holiness, which without it are unknown and impossible. It has laboured for the elect, and it has succeeded with them. This is, as it were, its token. An ordinary kind of religion, praiseworthy and respectable in its way, may exist under many systems; but saints are creations of the Gospel and the Church. An ordinary religious person is one who is amiable, obliging, and peaceable; or active, industrious, and serviceable; or upright, punctual, regular, and sensible; one who is satisfied with the religion he has already, and has no very earnest desires to "grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." But a saint has the excellences I have named and much more; not that in his lifetime he need seem to have more, for his higher graces lie deep, and are not known and understood till after his death, even if then. But then, it may be, he "shines forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father," figuring in his memory on earth what will be fulfilled in soul and body in heaven. And hence we are not accustomed to give to living men the *title* of saints, since *we* cannot well know, while they are among us, who have lived up to their calling and who not. But in process of time, after death, their excellence sometimes gets abroad; and then it becomes a witness, a specimen of what the Gospel can do, and a sample and a pledge of all those other high creations of God, His other saints in full number, and higher perhaps than itself, who die and are never known.

There are many reasons why God's saints cannot be known all at once;—first, as I have said, their good deeds are done in secret. Next, good men are often slandered, ridiculed, ill-treated in their lifetime; they are mistaken by those, whom they offend by their holiness and strictness, and perhaps they are obliged to withstand sin in their day, and this raises about them a cloud of prejudice and dislike, which in time indeed, but not till after a time, goes off. Then again their intentions and aims are misunderstood; and some of their excellent deeds or noble traits of character are known to some men, others to others, not all to all. This is the case in their lifetime; but after their death, when envy and anger have died away, and men talk together about them, and compare what each knows, their good and holy deeds are added up; and while they evidence their fruitfulness, clear up or vindicate their motives, and strike the mind of survivors with astonishment and fear; and the Church honours them, thanks God for them, and "glorifies God in"* them. This is why the saints of God are com-

* Gal. i. 24.

monly honoured, not while they live, but in their death ; and if I am asked to state more fully how such a one differs from an ordinary religious man, I say in this,—that he sets before him as the one object of life, to please and obey God ; that he ever aims to submit his will to God's will ; that he earnestly follows after holiness ; and that he is habitually striving to have a closer resemblance to Christ in all things. He exercises himself, not only in social duties, but in Christian graces ; he is not only kind, but meek ; not only generous but humble ; not only persevering, but patient ; not only upright, but forgiving ; not only bountiful, but self-denying ; not only contented, but meditative and devotional. An ordinary man thinks it enough to do as he is done by ; he will think it fair to resent insults, to repay injuries, to show a becoming pride, to insist on his rights, to be jealous of his honour, when in the wrong to refuse to confess it, to seek to be rich, to desire to be well with the world, to fear what his neighbours will say. He seldom thinks of the day of judgment, seldom thinks of sins past, says few prayers, cares little for the Church, has no zeal for God's truth, spends his money on himself. Such is an ordinary Christian, and such is not one of God's elect. For the latter is more than just, temperate, and kind ; he has a devoted love of God, high faith, holy hope, ever-flowing charity, a noble self-command, a strict conscientiousness, humility never absent, gentleness in speech, simplicity, modesty, and unaffectedness, an unconsciousness of what his endowments are, and what they make him in God's sight. This is what Christianity has done in the world ; such is the result of Christian teaching ; to elicit, foster, mature the seeds of heaven which lie hid in the earth, to multiply, (if it may be said) images of Christ, which, though they be few, are worth all else that is among men, and are an ample recompense and “a crown of rejoicing” for Apostles and Evangelists “in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming.”*

It is no triumph then for unbelievers that the Gospel has not done what it never attempted. From the first it announced what was to be the condition of the many who heard and professed it. “Many are called, few are chosen.” “Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Though we laboured ever so much, with the hope of satisfying the the objector, we could not reverse our Saviour's witness, and make the many religious, and the bad few. We can but do what is to be done. With our utmost toil we do but reach those for whom crowns are pre-

* 1 Thess. ii. 19.

pared in heaven." "Whom He did foreknow, them did He predestinate." "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy let him be holy still."* We cannot destroy the personal differences which separate man and man; and to lay it as a fault to baptism, teaching, and other ministrations, that they cannot pass the bounds predicted in God's word, is as little reasonable as attempting to make one mind the same as another.

And if this be the case, how mistaken is the notion of the day, that the main undertaking of a Christian Church is to make men good members of society, honest, upright, industrious, and well-conducted; and that it fails of its duty, and has cause of shame unless it succeeds in doing so; and that of two religious communities that must be the more scriptural in its tenets, of which the members are more decent and orderly!—whereas it may easily happen that a corruption of the Gospel, which sacrifices the better fruit, may produce the more abundant, men being not unwilling to compound for neglect of a strict rule by submitting to an easy one. How common is it, at this time, to debate the question, whether the plans of education pursued for the last fifty years have diminished crime or not; whether those who are convicted of offences against the law have commonly been at school or not! Such inquiries surely are out of place, if Christian education is in question. If the Church set out by engaging to make men good members of the state, they would be very much in place; but if the great object of her Sacraments, preaching, Scriptures, and instructions, is to save the elect of God, to foster into life and rear up into perfection what is really good, not in the sight of man merely, but in the sight of God; not what is useful merely, but what is true and holy; and if to influence those who act on secondary motives require a lowering of the Christian standard, and if an exhibition of the truth makes a man worse unless it makes him better,—then she has fulfilled her calling if she has saved the few; and she has done more than her calling, so far as by God's grace she has consistently with the higher object restrained, softened, or sobered the many. Much doubtless she will do in this way, but what she does must not be by compromise or unfaithfulness. The Church and the world cannot meet without either the world rising or the Church falling; and the world forsooth pleads necessity, and says it cannot rise to the Church, and deems the Church unreasonable when she will not descend instead.

The Gospel then has come to us, not merely to make us good sub-

* Rom. viii. 29. Rev. xxii. 11.

jects, good citizens, good members of society, but to make us members of the New Jerusalem, and "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God." Certainly no one is a true Christian who is not a good subject and member of society; but neither is he a true Christian if he is nothing more than this. If he is not aiming at something beyond the power of the natural man, he is not really a Christian. And this is the reason why the elect are few, because few can be brought to believe, love, and pursue what they do not see. The Gospel offers to us things supernatural. "Call unto Me," says Almighty God by His prophet, "and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not."* Now the multitude of men do not enter into the force of such an invitation, or feel its graciousness or desirableness. They are satisfied to remain where they find themselves by nature, to be what the world makes them, to bound their conceptions of things by sight and touch, and to conceive of the Gospel according to the thoughts, motives, and feelings which spring up spontaneously within them. They form their religion for themselves from what they are, and live and die in the ordinary and commonplace round of hopes and fears, pleasures and pains. In the ordinary commonplace round of *duties* indeed, they ought to be engaged, and are bound to find satisfaction. To be out of conceit with our lot in life, is no high feeling,—it is discontent or ambition; but to be out of conceit with the ordinary way of *viewing* our lot, with the ordinary thoughts and feelings of mankind, is nothing but to be a Christian. This is the difference between wordly ambition and heavenly. It is a heavenly ambition which prompts us to soar above the vulgar and ordinary *motives* and *tastes* of the world, the while we abide *in* our calling; like our Saviour who, though the Son of God and partaking His Father's fulness, yet all His youth long was obedient to His earthly parents, and learned a humble trade. But it is a sordid, narrow, miserable ambition to attempt to *leave* our earthly lot; to be wearied or ashamed of what we are, to hanker after greatness of station, or novelty of life. However, the multitude of men go neither the one way nor the other; they neither have the high ambition nor the low ambition. It is well they have not the low, certainly; it is well they do not aim at being great men, or heroes; but they have no temptation to do so. What they are tempted to, is to settle down in a satisfied way in the world as they find it, to sit down in the "mire and dirt" of their natural state, to immerse themselves and be absorbed in the unhealthy marsh which is under them. They tend to become part of the world, and be

* Jer. xxxiii. 3.

sucked in by it, and (as it were) changed into it; and so to lose all aspirations and thoughts, whether good or bad, after any thing higher than what they are. I do not know whether rich or poor are in greater temptation this way. Poor people, having daily wants, having their bread to earn, and raiment and shelter to provide, being keenly and earnestly and day by day pressed with the realities of pain and anxiety, seem cut off from all high thoughts. To call on a poor man to live a Seraph's life, to live above the world, and to be ambitious of perfection, seems at first sight, as things go, all one with bidding him be a man of refinement of mind or literary taste, a man of science, or a philosopher. Yet is it so? Were not the Apostles in great necessities? had not St. Paul to work for his livelihood? did they eat and drink at their will? did they know one day where they should get their meal or lay their head the next? Surely not; yet they were as expressly told as others, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."* And then it is promised with an express reference to those anxieties about food and clothing, "And all these things shall be added unto you." That passage in our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount shows us most undeniably, that poverty must not be allowed to make men—is no excuse for having made men—what poor people so often are, anxious, fretful, close, deceitful, dull-minded, suspicious, envious, or complaining. No; much as we ought to feel for the poor, yet, if our Saviour's words be true, there is nothing to hinder the poorest man from living the life of an Angel, living in all the unearthly contemplative blessedness of a Saint in glory, except so far as sin interferes with it. I mean, it is *sin*, and not poverty which is the hindrance.

Such is the case with the poor; now again take the case of those who have a competency. They too are swallowed up in the cares or interests of life as much as the poor are. While want keeps the one from God by unsettling his mind, a competency keeps the other by the seductions of ease and plenty. The poor man says, "I cannot go to Church or to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, till I am more at ease in my mind; I am troubled, and my thoughts are not my own." The rich man does not make any excuses,—he comes; but his "heart goeth after his covetousness." It is not enlarged by being rid of care; but is as little loosened from what is seen, as little expatiates in the free and radiant light of Gospel day, as if that day had not been poured upon it. No; such a one may be far other than a mere man of the world,—he may be a religious man, in the common sense of the word; he may be exemplary in his conduct, as far as the social duties of life

* Matt. vi. 33.

go ; he may be really and truly, and not in pretence, kind, benevolent, sincere, and in a manner serious ; but so it is, his mind has never been unchained to soar aloft, he does not look out with longing into the infinite spaces in which, as a Christian, he has free range.

Our Lord praises those who "*hunger and thirst* after righteousness." *This* is what men in general are without. They are more or less "full, and have need of nothing," in religious matters ; they do not feel how great a thing it is to be a Christian, and how far they fall short of it. They are contented with themselves on the whole ; they are quite conscious indeed that they do act up to their standard, but it is their standard that is low. A sort of ordinary obedience suffices them as well as the poor. A person in straitened circumstances will say, "I have enough to do to take care of my wife and children ;" another says, "I have lost my husband and friends, and have enough to do to take care of myself ;" by-standers say, "What a mockery to call on a starving population, to watch, fast, and pray, and aim at perfection." Well, let me turn, I say, to the rich men, and speak to them ; what say the rich ? *They* put aside all such hungering and thirsting after righteousness as visionary, high-flown, and what they call romantic. They have a certain definite and clear view of their duties ; they think that the summit of perfection is to be decent and respectable in their calling, to enjoy moderately the pleasures of life, to eat and drink, and marry and give in marriage, and buy and sell, and plant and build, and to take care that religion does not *engross* them. Alas ! and is it so ? is the superhuman life enjoined on us in the Gospel but a dream ? is there no meaning in our case, of the texts about the strait gate and the narrow way, and Mary's good part, and the rule of perfection, and the saying which "all cannot receive save they to whom it is given ?" Holy men, certainly, do not throw themselves out of their stations. They are not gloomy, or morose, or overbearing, or restless ; but still they are pursuing in their daily walk, and by their secret thoughts and actions, a conduct *above* the world. Whether rich or poor, high-born or low-born, married or single, they have never wedded themselves to the world ; they have never surrendered themselves to be her captives ; never looked out for station, fashion, comfort, credit, as the end of life. They have kept up the feeling which young people often have, who at first ridicule the artificial forms and usages of society, and find it difficult to conform themselves to its pomp and pretence. Of course it is not wise to ridicule and run counter to any thing that is in its nature indifferent ; and as they have grown older they have learned this ; but the feeling remains of distaste and want of sympathy with it ; whereas these are the very things which men of the world are most proud of.

their appointments, and their dress, and their bearing, and their gentility, and their acquaintance with great men, and their connections, and their power of managing, and their personal importance.

God grant to us a simple, reverent, affectionate temper, that we may truly be the Church's children, and fit subjects of her instructions. This gained, the rest through His grace will follow. This is the temper of those "little ones," whose "Angels do always behold the face" of our heavenly Father; of those for whom Apostles endured all things; to whom the Ordinances of grace minister, and whom Christ "nourisheth and cherisheth" even as His own flesh.

SERMON XI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

PSALM cxlv. 10, 11.

All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy Saints give thanks unto Thee: they show the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power.

It was the great promise of the Gospel, that the Lord of all, who had hitherto manifested Himself externally to His servants, should take up His abode in their hearts. This, as you must recollect, is frequently the language of the Prophets; and it was the language of our Saviour when He came on earth; "I will love him," he says, speaking of those who love and obey Him, "and will manifest Myself to him We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."* Though He had come in our flesh, so as to be seen and handled, even this was not enough. Still He was external and separate; but after His ascension He descended again by and in His Spirit, and then at length the promise was fulfilled.

* John xiv. 2 . 23.

There must indeed be a union between all creatures and their Almighty Creator even for their very existence; for it is said, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being;" and in one of the Psalms, "When Thou lettest Thy breath go forth, they shall be made."* But far higher, more intimate, and more sacred is the indwelling of God in the hearts of His elect people;—so intimate, that, compared with it, He may well be said not to inhabit other men at all; His presence being specified as the characteristic privilege of His own redeemed servants.

From the day of Pentecost to the present time, it has been their privilege, according to the promise, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you *for ever*,"—for ever: not like the Son of man, who having finished His gracious work went away. Then it is added, "even the *Spirit* of Truth:" that is, He who came for ever, came not in a body, but as being a Spirit; and coming as a Spirit, that is, in the eternal and infinite nature of the Godhead, He did that which the visible flesh and blood of the Son of man, from its very nature, could not do, viz. He came into the souls of all who believe, and taking possession of their souls, He, being One, knit them altogether into one. Christ, by coming into the flesh, provided an external or apparent unity, such as had been under the Law. He formed His Apostles into a visible society; but when He came again in the person of His Spirit, He made them all in a real sense one, not in name only. For they were no longer arranged merely in the form of unity, as the limbs of the dead may be, but they were parts and organs of one unseen power; they really depended upon, and were offshoots of that which was One; their separate persons were taken into a mysterious union with things unseen, were grafted upon and assimilated to the spiritual Body of Christ, which is One, even by the Holy Ghost, in whom Christ has come again to us. Thus Christ came, not to make us one, but to die for us: the Spirit came to make us one in Him who had died and was alive, that is, to form the Church.

This then is the special glory of the Christian Church, that its members do not depend merely on what is visible, they are not mere stones of a building, piled one on another, and bound together from without, but they are one and all the births and manifestations of one and the same unseen spiritual principle or power, "*living stones*," internally connected, as branches from a tree, not as the parts of a heap. They are members of the Body of Christ. That divine and adorable Form, which the Apostles saw and handled, after ascending into heaven became a principle of life, a secret origin of existence to all who believe,

* Psalm civ. 30.

through the gracious ministration of the Holy Ghost. This is the fruitful Vine, and the rich Olive tree upon and out of which all Saints, though wild and barren by nature, grow, that they may bring forth fruit unto God. So that in a true sense it may be said, that from the day of Pentecost to this hour there has been in the Church but One Holy One, the King of kings, and Lord of lords Himself, who is in all believers, and through whom they are what they are ; their separate persons being but as separate developments, vessels, instruments and works of Him who is invisible. Such is the difference between the Church before the Spirit of Christ came, and after. Before, God's servants were as the dry bones of the Prophet's vision, connected by profession, not by inward principle ; but since, they are all the organs as if of one invisible, governing Soul, the hands, or the tongues, or the feet, or the eyes of one and the same directing Mind, the types, tokens, beginnings, and glimpses of the Eternal Son of God. Hence the text, in speaking of the kingdom of Christ, enlarges upon the special office of His Saints,—"All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy Saints give thanks unto Thee : they show the glory of Thy kingdom, and talk of Thy power, that Thy power, Thy glory, and mightiness of Thy kingdom might be known unto men."

Such is the Christian Church, a *living* body, and *one* ; not a mere framework artificially arranged to *look* like one. Its being alive is what makes it one ; were it dead, it would consist of as many parts as it has members ; but the Living *Spirit* of God came down upon it at Pentecost, and made it *one*, by giving it *life*.

On this great day then,* when we commemorate the quickening or vivifying of the Church, the birth of the spiritual and new creature out of an old world "as good as dead," it will be seasonable to consider the nature and attributes of this Church, as manifested in the elect, as invisible, one, living, and spiritual ; or what is otherwise called the doctrine of the Communion of Saints with each other, and in the Holy Trinity, in whom their communion with each other consists. And this I the rather do, because the Communion of Saints is an article of the Creed, and therefore is not a matter of secondary importance, of doubt or speculation.

The Church then, properly considered, is that great company of the elect, which has been separated by God's free grace, and His Spirit working in due season, from this sinful world, regenerated, and vouchsafed perseverance unto life eternal. Viewed so far as it merely consists of persons *now* living in this world, it is of course a visible company ; but in its nobler and truer character it is a body invisible, or

* Preached on Whitsunday.

nearly so, as being made up, not merely of the few who happen still to be on their trial, but of the many who sleep in the Lord. At first, indeed, in the lifetime of the Apostles, a great proportion of the whole body was in this world; that is, not taking into account those Saints, who had lived in Jewish times, and whom Christ, on His departure, made partakers of the privileges then purchased by His death for *all* believers. St. Stephen and St. James the Greater were the first distinguished Saints of the New Covenant who were gathered in, to enrich the elder company of Moses, Elias, and their brethren. But from that time they have flowed in apace; and as years passed away, greater and greater has become the proportion which the assembly of spirits made perfect bears to the body militant which is its complement in God's new creation.

At present, we who live are but one generation out of fifty, which since its formation have been new born into it, and endowed with spiritual life and the hope of glory. Fifty times as many saints are in the invisible world sealed for immortality, as we are now struggling on upon earth towards it; unless indeed the later generations have a greater measure of Saints than the former ones. Well then may the Church be called invisible, not only as regards her vital principle, but in respect to her members. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit;" and since God the Holy Ghost is invisible, so is His work. The Church is invisible, because the greater number of her true children have been perfected and removed, and because those who are still on earth cannot be ascertained by mortal eye; and had God so willed, she might have had no visible tokens at all of her existence, and been as entirely and absolutely hidden from us as the Holy Ghost is, her Lord and Governor. But seeing that the Holy Ghost is our life, so that to gain life we must approach Him, in mercy to us, His place of abode, the Church of the Living God, is not so utterly veiled from our eyes as He is; but He has given us certain outward signs, as tokens for knowing, and means for entering that Living Shrine in which He dwells. He dwells in the hearts of His Saints, in that temple of living stones, on earth and in heaven, which is ever showing the glory of His kingdom, and talking of His power; but since faith and love and joy and peace cannot be seen, since the company of His people are His secret ones, He has given us something outward as a guide to what is inward, something visible, as a guide to what is spiritual.

What is that outward visible guide, having the dispensation of what is unseen, but the Christian Ministry, which directs and leads us to the very Holy of Holies, in which Christ dwells by His Spirit? As landmarks or buoys inform the steersman, as the shadow on the dial is an

index of the sun's course ; so, if we would cross the path of Christ, if we would arrest His eye and engage His attention, if we would interest ourselves in the special virtue and fulness of His grace, we must join ourselves to that Ministry which, when He ascended up on high, He gave us as a relic, and let drop from Him, as the mantle of Elijah, the pledge and token of His never-failing grace from age to age. "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon ; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions."* Such is the petition, as it were, of the soul that seeks for Christ. His answer is as precise as the question. "If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the *footsteps* of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the *shepherds' tents*." We know that out of the Church is no salvation ;— I mean, out of that great invisible company who are one and all incorporate in the one mystical body of Christ, and quickened by one Spirit ; now by adhering to the visible Ministry which the Apostles left behind them, we approach unto what we see not, to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the spirits of the just, to the first born elected to salvation, to Angels innumerable, to Jesus the One Mediator, and to God. This heavenly Jerusalem is the true spouse of Christ and Virgin Mother of Saints ; and the visible Ministry on earth, the Bishops and Pastors, together with Christians depending on them, at this or that day is *called* the Church, though really but a fragment of it, as being that part of it which is seen and can be pointed out, and as resembling it in type, and witnessing it, and leading towards it. This *invisible* body is the *true* Church, because it changes not, though it is ever increasing. What it has, it keeps, and never loses ; but what is visible is fleeting and transitory, and continually passes off into the invisible. It is ever dying for the increase of the invisible company, and is ever re-produced from out the mass of human corruption, by the virtue of the Spirit lodged in the invisible, and acting upon the world. Generation after generation is born, tried, sifted, strengthened, and perfected. Again and again the Apostles live in their successors, and their successors in turn are gathered unto the Apostles. Such is the efficacy of that inexhaustible grace which Christ has lodged in His Church as a principle of life and increase, till He comes again. The expiring breath of His Saints is but the quickening of dead souls.

And now we may form a clearer notion than is commonly taken of the one Church Catholic which is in all lands. Properly it is not on earth, except so far as heaven can be said to be on earth, or as the dead are still with us. It is not on earth, except in such sense as

* Cant. i. 7, 8,

Christ or His Spirit are on the earth. I mean it is not locally or visibly on earth. The Church is not in time or place, but in the region of spirits ; it is in the Holy Ghost ; and as the soul of man is in every part of his body, yet in no part, not here nor there, yet every where ; not in any one part, head or heart, hands or feet, so as not to be in every other ; so also the heavenly Jerusalem, the mother of our new birth, is in all lands at once, fully and entirely, as a spirit ; in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South,—that is, wherever her outward instruments are to be found. The Ministry and Sacraments, the bodily presence of Bishop and people, are given us as keys and spells, by which we bring ourselves into the presence of the great company of Saints ; they are as much as this, but they are no more ; they are not identical with that company ; they are but the outskirts of it ; they are but porches to the pool of Bethesda, entrances into that which is indivisible and one. Baptism admits, not into a mere visible society, varying with the country in which it is administered, Roman here, and Greek there, and English there, but *through* the English or the Greek or the Roman porch into the one invisible company of elect souls, which is independent of time and place, and untinctured with the imperfections or errors of that visible porch by which entrance is made. And its efficacy lies in the inflowing upon the soul of the grace of God lodged in that unseen body into which it opens, not, in any respect, in the personal character of those who administer or assist in it. When a child is brought for baptism, the Church invisible claims it, begs it of God, receives it, and extends to it, as God's instrument, her own sanctity. When we praise God in Holy Communion, we praise Him with the Angels and Archangels, who are the guards, and with the Saints, who are the citizens of the city of God. When we offer our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, or partake in the Sacred elements so offered, we solemnly eat and drink of the powers of the world to come. When we read the Psalms, we use before many witnesses the very words on which those witnesses themselves,—I mean, all successive generations of that holy company,—have sustained themselves in their own day, for thousands of years past, during their pilgrimage heavenward. When we profess the Creed, it is no self-willed, arbitrary sense, but in the presence of those innumerable Saints who well remember what its words mean, and are witnesses of it before God, in spite of the heresy or indifference of this or that day. When we stand over their graves, we are in the very vestibule of that dwelling which is “all-glorious within” full of light and purity, and of voices crying, “Lord, how long?” When we pray in private, we are not solitary ; others “are gathered together” with us “in Christ's Name,”

though we see them not, with Christ in the midst of them. When we approach the Ministry He has ordained, we approach the steps of His throne. When we approach the Bishops, who are the centres of that Ministry, what have we before us but the Twelve Apostles, present but invisible? When we use the sacred Name of Jesus, or the Sign given us in Baptism, what do we but bid defiance to devils and evil men, and gain strength to resist them? When we protest, or confess, or suffer in the Name of Christ, what are we but ourselves types and symbols of the Cross of Christ, and of the strength of Him who died on it? When we are called to battle for the Lord, what are we who are seen, but mere outposts, the advanced guard of a mighty host, ourselves few in number and despicable, but bold beyond our numbers, because supported by chariots of fire and horses of fire round about the Mountain of the Lord of Hosts under which we stand?

Such is the City of God, the Holy Church Catholic throughout the world, manifested in and acting through what is called in each country the Church visible; which visible Church really depends solely on it, on the invisible,—not on civil power, not on princes or any child of man, not on endowments, not on its numbers, not on any thing that is seen, unless indeed heaven can depend on earth, eternity on time, Angels on men, the dead on the living. The unseen world through God's secret power and mercy encroaches upon this; and the Church that is seen is just that portion of it by which it encroaches; and thus though the visible Churches of the Saints in this world seem rare, and scattered to and fro, like islands in the sea, they are in truth but the tops of the everlasting hills, high and vast and deeply rooted, which a deluge covers.

Now these thoughts are so very foreign from the world's ordinary view of things, which walks by sight not by faith, and never allows any thing to exist in what comes before it, but what it can touch and handle, that it is necessary to insist and enlarge upon them. The world then makes *itself* the standard of perfection and the centre of all good; and when the souls of Christians pass from it into the place of spirits, it fancies that this is *their* loss, not its own; it pities them in its way of speaking of them, and calls them by names half compassionate, half contemptuous, as if its own presence and society were some great thing. It pities them too as thinking that they do not witness the termination of what they began or saw beginning, that they are ignorant of the fortunes of their friends or of the Church, are powerless over their own schemes, or rather careless about them, as being insensible and but shadows and ghosts not substances; as if we who live were the real agents in the course of events, and they were attached to us only as a

church-yard to a church, which it is decent to respect, unsuitable to linger in. Such is its opinion of the dead; as though *we* were in light and they in darkness,—we in power and influence, they in weakness,—we the living, and they the dead; yet with the views opened on us in the Gospel, with the knowledge that the One Spirit of Christ ever abides, and that those who are made one with Him are never parted from Him, and that those who die in Him are irrevocably knit into Him and one with Him, shall we dare to think slightly of these indefectible members of Christ and vessels of future glory? Shall we presume to compare that great assemblage of the elect, perfected and at rest,—shall we weigh in the balance that glorious Church invisible, so populous in souls, so pure from sin, so rid of probation, with ourselves, poor strugglers with the flesh and the devil, who have but the earnest, not the crown of victory, whose names are not so written in the heavens, but they may be blotted out again? Shall we doubt for a moment, though St. Paul was martyred centuries upon centuries since, that he, who even when in the body was present in spirit with the Corinthians when he was at Ephesus, is present in the Church still, more truly alive than those who are called living, more truly and awfully an Apostle now upon a throne than when he had fightings without and fears within, a thorn in his flesh, and a martyrdom in prospect? Shall we be as infidels to suppose that the Church is only what she seems to be, a poor, helpless, despised, and human institution, scorned by the wealthy, plundered by the violent, out-reasoned by the sophist, and patronized by the great, and not rather believe that she is serving in presence of the Eternal Throne, round which are the “four and twenty seats, and upon the seats” are “four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment,” and “on their heads crowns of gold?”* Nay, shall we not dimly recognize amid the aisles of our churches and along our cloisters, about our ancient tombs, and in ruined and desolate places, which once were held sacred,—not in cold poetical fancy, but by the eye of faith,—the spirits of our fathers and brethren of every time, past and present, whose works have long been “known” to God, and whose former dwelling-places remain among us, pledges (as we trust) that He will not utterly forsake us, and make an end? Can aught mortal and earthly, force without, or treachery within, the popular voice, or any will of man, aught in the whole universe, height or depth, or any other creature, aught save the decree of God, issued for our sins, chase away our holy unseen companions from us, and level us with the grass of the field? Can all the efforts of the children of men, their accurate delineations

* Rev. iv. 4.

of our outward form, their measurement of our visible territory, their summing up of our substance, their impairing of our civil rights, their numbering of our supporters, circumscribe the City of the Living God, or ascertain the site of Eden, and the Mountain of the Saints?

But here it may be asked whether such a belief in the ever-abiding presence among us of the Church invisible, in that Spirit which all allow to be ever present with us to the end, does not interfere with our comfortable assurance that it is at rest. "Christ (it may be said) worketh hitherto as His Father worketh; and the Angels excel in strength; but human nature, even in the purest and more heavenly specimens, is unequal to this incessant watchfulness, and when it dies is said to fall asleep:—why should we not leave it to so comfortable and gracious a portion?" Now, however we answer this question, so far is certain, for we have St. Paul's authority for saying it, that in coming to the Church, we approach, not God alone, nor Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, nor Angels innumerable, but also, as he says expressly, "the spirits of the just made perfect." And in thus speaking, he is evidently speaking neither of saints on earth nor saints after the resurrection, were it only that he designates especially "the *spirits* of the *just*." Certainly, then, the Church, in St. Paul's judgment, is made up of the dead as well as the living; and though this be so, though the dead be present, it does not follow they are not at rest also. Such presence in the Church does not involve any labour or toil, any active interference on the part of those who (we are told) "rest from their labours." For it is plain, though they "live unto God," and have power with Him, this does not imply that they *act*, or that they are *conscious* of their power. This holds good, through God's mercy, in the case of those who labour in the flesh, who pray and preach, work righteousness, and glorify God. They too see none of those fruits which notwithstanding do follow them. Had Noah, Daniel, and Job been in any evil city, and saved it by their righteousness from destruction, would they have known what they were enabled to do? We have no reason to say they would; for it is one thing to do good, another to see we do it.

But again, it may be quite true that in one sense they are at rest, and yet in another active promoters of the Church's welfare, as by prayer; though we know not *how* they are active, or *how* they are at rest, or *how* they can be both at once. It is said that God "rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made," yet nevertheless that He "worketh hitherto." Surely, in Him who is eternal and all-sufficient, is found absolutely and perfectly that incomprehensible union of Almighty power with everlasting repose; and what He is in fulness,

He may graciously impart in its degree, and according to their capacity to His chosen. If it is no contradiction in terms that God should rest and yet work, that the Son of God should die and yet have an eternal essence, that the Son of man should be in heaven while He spoke to Nicodemus, it may be no contradiction that the soul of man should sleep in the intermediate state, and yet be awake. I say, what God has infinitely and by nature, He may bestow in part to us; and thus it may be true that though the Saints are "joyful with glory," and "rejoice in their beds," and "the praises of God" are "in their mouths," yet at the same time, "a two-edged sword" is "in their hands to be avenged of the heathen, and to rebuke the people; to bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with links of iron; that they may be avenged of them, as it is written; such honour have all His Saints."*

Lastly, while we thus think of the invisible Church, we are restrained by many reasons from such invocations of her separate members as are unhappily so common in other Christian countries. First, because the practice was not primitive, but an addition when the world had poured into the Church; next, because we are told to pray to God only, and invocation may easily be corrupted into prayer, and then becomes idolatrous. And further, it must be considered that though the Church is represented in Scripture as a channel of God's gifts to us, yet it is only as a body and sacramentally, not as an agent, nor in her members one by one. St. Paul does not say that we are brought near to this saint or that saint, but to all together, "to the spirits of just men made perfect;" one by one they have to undergo the Day of judgment, but as a body they are the City of God, the immaculate spouse of the Lamb.

Let us then stand in that lot in which God has placed us, and thank Him for what He has so mercifully, so providentially done for us. He has done all things well,—neither too much nor too little. He has neither told us to neglect the faithful servants of Christ departed, nor to pay them undue honour; so as to think of them, yet not speak to them; to make much of them, but to trust solely in Him. Let us follow His rule, neither exceeding nor wanting in our duty; but according to St. Paul's injunction, "using" His gifts "without abusing" them; not ceasing to use, lest we *should* abuse, but abstaining from the abuse, while we adhere thankfully to the use.

These are inspiring thoughts for the solitary, the dejected, the harassed, the defamed, or the despised Christian; and they belong to him, if by act and deed he unites in that Communion which he professes. He joins the Church of God, not merely who speaks about it, or who de-

* Ps. cxlix. 5—9.

fends it, or who contemplates it, but who loves it. He loves the unseen company of believers, who loves those who are near Him. The test of our being joined to Christ is love; the test of love towards Christ and His Church, is loving those whom we actually see. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?"* As then we would be worthy to hold communion with believers of every time and place, let us hold communion duly with those of our own day and our own neighbourhood. Let us pray God to teach us what we are so deficient in, and save us from using words and cherishing thoughts which our actions put to shame. It is a very easy thing to say fine things, which we have no right to say. Let us feel tenderly affectioned towards all whom Christ has made His own by Baptism. Let us sympathize with them, and have kind thoughts towards them, and be warm-hearted, and loving, and simple-minded, and gentle-tempered towards them, and consult for their good, and pray for their growth in faith and holiness. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." For "God is love;" and "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us."

S E R M O N X I I .

THE CHURCH A HOME FOR THE LONELY.

EPHESIANS ii. 6.

Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

DID we from our youth up follow the guidings of God's grace, we should, without reasoning and without severe trial, understand that heaven is an object claiming our highest love and most persevering exertions. Such doubtless is the blessedness of some persons; such in a degree is perchance the blessedness of many. There are those who, like Samuel, dwell in the Temple of God holy and undefiled from

* 1 John iv. 20.

infancy, and, after the instance of John the Baptist, are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, if not as he, from their mother's womb, yet from their second birth in Holy Baptism. And there are others who possess this great gift more or less, in whom the divine light has been preserved, even though it has been latent ; not quenched or overborne by open sin, even though it has not been from the first duly prized and cherished. Many there are, one would hope, who keep their baptismal robes unstained, even though the wind and storm of this world, and the dust of sloth and carelessness for a while discolour them ; till in due season they arouse them from their dreams, and, before it is too late, give their hearts to God. All these, whether they have followed Him from infancy, or from childhood, or from boyhood, or from youth, or from opening manhood, have never been wedded to this world ; they have never given their hearts to it, or vowed obedience or done folly in things of time and sense. And therefore they are able, from the very power of God's grace, as conveyed to them through the ordinances of the Gospel, to understand that the promise of heaven is the greatest, most blessed promise which could be given.

Others turn from God, and fall into courses of wilful sin, and they of course lose the divine light originally implanted ; and if they are recovered, are recovered by a severer discipline. They are recovered by finding disappointment and suffering from that which they had hoped would bring them good ; they learn to love God and prize heaven, not by baptismal grace, but by trial of the world ; they seek the world, and they are driven by the world back again to God. The world is blessed to them, in God's good providence, as an instrument of His grace, transmuted from evil to good, as if a second sacrament, doing over again what was done in infancy, and then undone. They are led to say, with St. Peter, " Lord, to whom *shall* we go ?" for they have tried the world, and it fails them ; they have trusted it, and it deceives them ; they have leant upon it, and it pierces them through ; they have sought it for indulgence, and it has scourged them for their penance. O blessed lot of those, whose wanderings, though they wander, are thus overruled ; that what they lose of the free gift of God, they regain by His compulsory remedies !

But almost all men, whether they are thereby moved to return to God or not, will on experience feel, and confess, and that in no long time, that the world is not enough for their happiness, and they accordingly seek means to supply their need, though they do not go to religion for it. Though they will not accept God's remedy, yet they confess that a remedy is needed, and have recourse to what they think will prove such. Though they may not love God and His holy heaven,

yet they find they cannot take up with the world, and cast their lot with it wholly, much as they may wish it. This leads me to the subject which I propose to consider, as suggested by the text ; viz. the need which mankind lies under of some shelter, refuge, rest, home or sanctuary from the outward world, and the shelter or secret place, which God has provided for them in Christ.

By the world, I mean all that meets a man in intercourse with his fellow men, whether in public or in private, all that is new, strange, and without natural connection with him. This outward world is at first sight most attractive and exciting to the generality of men. The young commonly wish to enter into it as if it would fulfil all their wants and hopes. They wish to enter into life as it is called. Their hearts beat, as they anticipate the time when they shall, in one sense or other, be their own masters. At home, or at school, they are under restraint, and thus they come to look forward to the liberty of the world, and the independence of being in it, as a great good. According to their rank in life, they wish to get into service, or they wish to go into business, or they wish to be principals in trade, or they wish to enter into the world's amusements and gaieties, or they look forward with interest to some profession or employment which stirs their ambition and promises distinction.

And when their wish is gratified, for a time all things perhaps go as they would have them. There is so much novelty, and so much interest in what takes place out of doors, that they find themselves as if in a new state of existence, and in one way or other "rejoice in their youth." Happy they who are otherwise circumstanced : for there *are* a number after all who may be said to have no youth ; who from weak health, or from narrow circumstances, or from unkind superiors, or from family affliction, or from other causes, though in the world, have scarcely been exposed at all to its seductions, or have seen in it any thing to delight them, or to arrest their imagination or reason. God's providence has so ordered it for them, that, whatever be their peculiar trials and temptations, these do not come from the gaieties or the occupations of life. From the first they have only had experience of the world as a hard master, and owe it nothing. But whatever be our lot, whether to have had enjoyment from the world or not, whether we have not had the temptation, or not felt it, or felt it and overcome it, or felt it and been overcome, all men, whether religious or not, find in no long time that the world is insufficient for their happiness, and look elsewhere for repose.

Surely this is the case on all sides of us ; the outward world is found not to be enough for man, and he looks for some refuge near him,

more intimate, more secret, more pure, more calm and stable. This is a main reason, and a praiseworthy one, why a great number of better sort of persons look forward to marriage as the great object of life. They call it being settled; and so it is. The mind finds nothing to satisfy it in the employments and amusements of life, in its excitements, struggles, anxieties, efforts, aims and victories. Supposing a man to make money, to get on in life, to rise in society, to gain power, whether in a higher or lower sphere, this does not suffice; he wants a home, he wants a centre on which to place his thoughts and affections, a secret dwelling-place which may soothe him after the troubles of the world, and which may be his hidden stay and support wherever he goes, and dwell in his heart, though it be not named upon his tongue. The world may seduce, may terrify, may mislead, may enslave, but it cannot really inspire confidence and love. There is no rest for us, except in quietness, confidence, and affection; and hence all men without taking religion into account, seek to make themselves a home, as the only need of their nature, or are unhappy if they be without one. Thus they witness against the world, even though they be children of the world; witness against it equally with the holiest and most self-denying, who have by faith overcome it.

Here then Christ finds us, weary of that world in which we are obliged to live and act, whether as willing or unwilling slaves to it. He finds us needing and seeking a home, and making one, as we best may, by means of the creature, since it is all we can do. The world, in which our duties lie, is as waste as the wilderness, as restless and turbulent as the ocean, as inconstant as the wind and weather. It has no substance in it, but is like a shade or phantom; when you pursue it, when you try to grasp it, it escapes from you, or it is malicious, and does you a mischief. We need something which the world cannot give: this is what we need, and this it is which the Gospel has supplied.

I say, that our Lord Jesus Christ, after dying for our sins on the Cross, and ascending on high, left not the world as He found it, but left a blessing behind Him. He left in the world what before was not in it,—a secret home, for faith and love to enjoy, wherever found, in spite of the world around us. Do you ask what it is? the chapter from which the text is taken describes it. It speaks of “the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone;” of “the Building fitly framed” and “growing unto a Holy Temple in the Lord;” of “a Habitation of God through the Spirit.” This is the Church of God, which is our true Home of God’s providing, His own heavenly court, where He dwells with Saints and Angels,

into which He introduces us by a new birth, and in which we forget the outward world and its many troubles.

The Jews had some such refuge in their own material temple, though of course it was far inferior to that which Christ has provided. Thrice a year did all the males from every quarter go up to Jerusalem to appear before God in it; and some holy persons were even allowed to dwell in it. Such were the prophet Samuel in his youth, and Anna the prophetess in her old age; not to mention Priests and Levites, who were ever there by office. The Temple rose up stately and beautiful upon Mount Zion, invited the worshipper, admitted him, hid from him the outward world, with all its miseries and offences, and brought him immediately into God's Presence. No wonder, then, that David speaks with such devout affection of it, and with such sorrow and longing when he is away. "O how amiable are Thy dwellings," he says, "Thou Lord of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be always praising Thee. One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness." And again, "My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" "O send out Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me unto Thy holy hill and to Thy dwelling; and that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy and gladness; and upon the harp will I give thanks unto Thee, O God my God." And again, "Behold now, praise the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord: ye that by night stand in the house of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of our God. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the Lord."*

Such was the Jewish Temple; but, besides other deficiencies, as being visible and material, it was confined to one place. It could not be a home for the whole world, nay not for one nation, but only for a few out of the multitude. But the Christian Temple is invisible and spiritual, and hence admits of being every where. "The kingdom of God," says our Lord, speaking of it, "cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or Lo there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you." And again to the Samaritan woman, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. . . . The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth;

* Ps. lxxxiv. xlii. xliii. cxxxiv.

for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”* “In spirit and in truth;” for unless His Presence were invisible, it could not be real. That which is seen is not real; that which is material is dissoluble; that which is in time is temporary; that which is local is but partial. But the Christian Temple is wherever Christians are found in Christ’s Name; it is as fully in each place as if it were in no other; and we may enter it, and appear among its holy inmates, God’s heavenly family, as really as the Jewish worshipper betook himself to the visible courts of the Temple. We see nothing; but this, I repeat, is a condition necessary to its being every where. It would not be every where, if we saw it any where; we see nothing; but we enjoy every thing.

And thus is it set before us in the Old Testament, whether in prophecy or by occasional anticipation. Isaiah prophesies that “it shall come to pass, that the Mountain of the Lord’s House shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall flow unto it.” And it was shown by anticipation to Jacob and Elisha’s servant; to Jacob when he saw in his dream “a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven, and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it; and to Elisha’s servant when “the Lord opened the eyes of the young man . . . and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”† These were preparations of what was to be continually, when Christ came and “opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;” and what that opening consisted in, St. Paul tells us.—“Ye are come,” he says, “unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.” Such are the dwellers in our holy home; God Himself; Christ; the assembly of the first-born, such as the Apostles; Angels; and the spirits of the just. This being the case, no wonder the text actually speaks of the Church as heaven upon earth, saying that God “hath quickened us together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

What, then, the visible Temple was to the Jews, such and much more is the kingdom of heaven to us; it is really a refuge and hiding-

* Luke xvii. 20, 21. John iv. 21—24.

† Isa. ii. 2. Gen. xxviii. 12. 2 Kings vi. 17.

place as theirs was, and shuts out the world. When men are distressed with anxiety, care, and disappointment, what do they? they take refuge in their families; they surround themselves with the charities of domestic life, and make for themselves an inner world, that their affections may be something to rest on. Such was the gift which inspired men anticipated, and we enjoy in the Christian Church. "*Hide me*," the Psalmist prays, "from the gathering together of the froward, and from the insurrection of wicked doers." Again: "Keep me as the apple of an eye; *hide me* under the shadow of Thy wings; from the ungodly that trouble me." Again: "Blessed is the man whom Thou choosest and receivest unto Thee; he shall dwell in Thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of Thy House, even of Thy Holy Temple: Thou shalt show us wonderful things in Thy righteousness, O God of our salvation." And again: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require; even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His Temple: for in the time of trouble He shall *hide* me in His tabernacle, yea, in the secret place of His dwelling shall He *hide* me, and set me up upon a rock of stone." Again: "Thou art a place to *hide* me in, Thou shalt preserve me from trouble." Once more: "O how plentiful is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee. . . . Thou shalt *hide* them privily by *Thine own presence* from the provoking of all men; Thou shalt keep them *secretly* in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues. Thanks be to the Lord; for He hath showed me marvellous great kindness in a strong city." And in like manner the Prophets; for instance, the Prophet Isaiah says, "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment, and a man shall be as an *hiding-place* from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Again: "Thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat . . . in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest." "We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in; Thou wilt keep Him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee." And again: "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places; when it shall hail, coming down on the forest." With which agree many texts in the New Testament,

such as St. Paul's words to the Colossians, "Your life is *hid* with Christ in God."*

Now what has been said, little as it is to what might be brought together on the subject, may suffice to suggest to us that great privilege which we may enjoy, if we seek it, of dwelling in a heavenly home in the midst of this turbulent world. The world is no helpmeet for man, and a helpmeet he needs. No one, man nor woman, can stand alone; we are so constituted by nature; and the world, instead of helping us, is an open adversary. It but increases our solitariness. Elijah cried, "I, I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away."† How did Almighty God answer him? by graciously telling him that He had reserved to Himself a remnant of seven thousand true believers. Such is the blessed truth He brings home to us also. We may be full of sorrows; there may be fightings without any fears within; we may be exposed to the frown, censure, or contempt of men; we may be shunned by them; or, to take the lightest case, we may be (as we certainly shall be) wearied out by the unprofitableness of this world, by its coldness, unfriendliness, distance, and dreariness; we shall need something nearer to us. What is our resource? It is not in arm of man, in flesh and blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy home which God has given us in His Church; it is that everlasting City in which He has fixed His abode. It is that Mount invisible, where Angels are looking at us with their piercing eyes, and the voices of the dead call us. "Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Great privilege indeed, if we did but realize its greatness! Man seeks the creature, when the world distresses him; let us seek the Creator; let us "seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore." Let us turn from the world, let us hide ourselves in His dwelling-place, let us shroud ourselves from the earth, and disappear in the spiritual kingdom of our God. Great benefit indeed beyond thought, thus to ally ourselves with the upper creation of God instead of taking our portion with the lower! What can we want more than this, whether to satisfy our real wants or our own feeling of them? Do we need aid and comfort? Can anything of this world give such strength, as He who is present in that Sanctuary which He has given us? Do we need images and ideas to occupy our minds for encouragement and comfort, as intelligible companions, which we may think of, and dwell upon, and hold communion with, and be one with? What fellowship can be

* Ps. lxiv. xvii. lxx. xxvii. xxxii. xxxi. Isaiah xxxii. xxv. xxvi. Col. iii.

† 1 Kings xix. 10.

more glorious, more satisfying, than that which we may hold with those inmates of the City of God whom St. Paul enumerates? Leave then this earthly scene, O virgin soul, though most attractive and most winning; aim at a higher prize, a nobler companionship. Enter into the tabernacle of God. "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. . . . He shall defend thee under His wings, and thou shalt be safe under His feathers. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet." Satan may do his worst; he may afflict thee sore, he may wound thee, he may brand thee, he may cripple thee, as regards *this* world; but he cannot touch thee in things spiritual; he has no power over thee to bring thee into sin and God's displeasure. O virgin soul, let this be thy stay in the dark day. When thou art sick of the world, to whom shouldst thou go? to none short of Him who is the Heavenly Spouse of every faithful soul. Yield thyself to Him freely and without guile. "He will bring thee to the banqueting house, and His banner over thee shall be love. He will make thee to sit down under His shadow with great delight, and his fruit shall be sweet to thy taste." Thou needest covet nothing of earth; thou art full and aboundest; houses, and lands, and brethren, and parents, and wife, and children, are more than made up by "the special gift of faith, more acceptable to thy mind."* Though thou art in a body of flesh, a member of this world, thou hast but to kneel down reverently in prayer, and thou art at once in the society of Saints and Angels. Wherever thou art, thou canst, through God's incomprehensible mercy, in a moment bring thyself into the midst of God's holy Church invisible, and receive secretly that aid, the very thought of which is a present sensible blessing. Art thou afflicted? thou canst pray; art thou merry; thou canst sing psalms. Art thou lonely? does the day run heavily? fall on thy knees, and thy thoughts are at once relieved by the idea and by the reality of thy unseen companions. Art thou tempted to sin? think steadily of those who perchance witness thy doings from God's secret dwelling-place; hast thou lost friends? realize them by faith; art thou slandered? thou hast the praise of Angels; art thou under trial? thou hast their sympathy.

May thoughts like these my brethren, sink deep into your hearts and bring forth good fruit in holiness and constancy of obedience. Whatever has been your past life, whether (blessed be God) you have never trusted aught but God's sacred light within you, or whether you

* Wisd. iii. 14.

have trusted the world and it has failed you, God's mercies in Christ are here offered to you in full abundance. Come to Him for them; approach Him in the way He has appointed, and you shall find Him, as He has said, upon His Holy Hill of Zion. Let not your past sins keep you from Him. Whatever they be, they cannot interfere with His grace stored up for all who come to Him for it. If you have in past years neglected Him, perchance you will have to suffer for it; but fear not; He will give you grace and strength to bear such punishment as He may be pleased to inflict. Let not the thought of His just severity keep you at a distance. He can make even pain pleasant to you. Keeping from Him is not to escape from His power, only from His love. Surrender yourselves to Him in faith and holy fear. He is all-merciful, though all-righteous; and though He is awful in His judgments, He is nevertheless more wonderfully pitiful and of tender compassion above our largest expectations; and in the case of all who humbly seek Him, He will in "wrath remember mercy."

SERMON XIII.

THE INVISIBLE WORLD.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

THERE are two worlds, "the visible, and the invisible," as the Creed speaks,—the world we see, and the world we do not see; and the world we do not see as really exists as the world we do see. It really exists, though we see it not. The world we see we know to exist, *because* we see it. We have but to lift up our eyes and look around us, and we have proof of it: our eyes tell us. We see the sun, moon and stars, earth and sky, hills and valleys, woods and plains, seas and

rivers. And again, we see men, and the works of men. We see cities, and stately buildings, and their inhabitants ; men running to and fro, and busying themselves to provide for themselves and their families, or to accomplish great designs, or for the very business' sake. All that meets our eyes forms one world. It is an immense world ; it reaches to the stars. Thousands on thousands of years might we speed up the sky, and though we were swifter than the light itself, we should not reach them all. They are at distances from us greater than any that is assignable. So high, so wide, so deep is the world ; and yet it also comes near and close to us. It is every where ; and it seems to leave no room for any other world.

And yet, in spite of this universal world which we see, there is another world, quite as far-spreading, quite as close to us, and more wonderful ; another world all around us, though we see it not, and more wonderful than the world we see, for this reason if for no other, that we do not see it. All around us are numberless objects, coming and going, watching, working or waiting, which we see not : this is that other world, which the eyes reach not unto, but faith only.

Let us dwell upon this thought. We are born into a world of sense ; that is, of the real things which lie round about us, one great department comes to us, accosts us, through our bodily organs, our eyes, ears, and fingers. We feel, hear, and see them ; and we know they exist, because we do thus perceive them. Things innumerable lie about us, animate and inanimate ; but one particular class of these innumerable things is thus brought home to us through our senses. And moreover, while they act upon us, they make their presence known. We are sensible of them at the time, or are conscious that we perceive them. We not only see, but know that we see them ; we not only hold intercourse, but know what we do. We are among men, and we know that we are. We feel cold and hunger ; we know what sensible things remove them. We eat, drink, clothe ourselves, dwell in houses, converse and act with others, and perform the duties of social life ; and we feel vividly that we are doing so, while we do so. Such is our relation towards one part of the innumerable beings which lie around us. They act upon us, and we know it ; and we act upon them in turn, and know we do.

But all this does not interfere with the existence of that other world which I speak of, acting upon us, yet not impressing us with the consciousness that it does so. It may as really be present and exert an influence as that which reveals itself to us. And that such a world there is, Scripture tells us. Do you ask what it is, and what it contains ? I will not say that all that belongs to it is vastly more important than

that what we see, for among things visible are our fellow-men, and nothing created is more precious and noble than a human soul. But still, taking the things which we see altogether, and the things we do not see altogether, the world we do not see is on the whole a much higher world than that which we do see. For, first of all, He is there who is above all beings, who has created all, before whom they all are as nothing, and with whom nothing can be compared. Almighty God, we know, exists more really and absolutely than any of those fellow-men whose existence is conveyed to us through the senses; yet we see Him not, hear Him not, we do but "feel after Him," yet without finding Him. It appears, then, that the things which are seen are but a part, and but a secondary part of the beings about us, were it only on this ground, that God Almighty, the Being of beings, is not in their number, but among "the things which are not seen." Once, and once only, for thirty-three years, has He condescended to become one of the beings which are seen, when, in the Person of His Only-begotten Son, He was, by an unspeakable mercy, born of the Virgin Mary into this sensible world. And then He was seen, heard, handled; He ate, He drank, He slept, He conversed, He went about, He acted as other men; but excepting this brief period, His presence has never been perceptible; He has never made us conscious of His existence by means of our senses. He came, and He retired beyond the veil: and to us individually, it is as if He had never showed Himself; we have as little sensible experience of His presence. Yet "He liveth evermore."

And in that other world are the souls also of the dead. They too, when they depart hence, do not cease to exist, but they retire from this visible scene of things; or, in other words, they cease to act towards us and before us *through our senses*. They live as they lived before; but that outward frame, through which they were able to hold communion with other men, is in some way, we do not know how, separated from them, and dries away and shrivels up as leaves may drop off a tree. They remain, but without the usual means of approach towards us, and correspondence with us. As when a man loses his voice or hand, he still exists as before, but cannot any longer talk or write, or otherwise hold intercourse with us; so when he loses not voice and hand only, but his whole frame, or is said to die, there is nothing to show that he is gone, but we have lost our means of apprehending him.

Again: Angels also are inhabitants of the world invisible, and concerning them much more is told us than concerning the souls of the faithful departed, because the latter "rest from their labours;" but the Angels are actively employed among us in the Church.

They are said to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation."* No Christian is so humble but he has Angels to attend on him, if he lives by faith and love. Though they are so great, so glorious, so pure, so wonderful, that the very sight of them (if we were allowed to see them) would strike us to the earth, as it did the prophet Daniel, holy and righteous as he was; yet they are our "fellow-servants" and our fellow-workers, and they carefully watch over and defend even the humblest of us, if we be Christ's. That they form a part of our unseen world, appears from the vision seen by the patriarch Jacob. We are told, that when he fled from his brother Esau, "he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place, to sleep."† How little did he think that there was any thing very wonderful in this spot! It looked like any other spot. It was a lone, uncomfortable place: there was no house there: night was coming on; and he had to sleep upon the bare rock. Yet how different was the truth! He saw but the world that is seen; he saw not the world that is not seen; yet the world that is not seen was there. It was there, though it did not at once make known its presence, but needed to be supernaturally displayed to him. He saw it in his sleep. "He dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached up to heaven; and behold, the Angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it." This was the other world. Now, let this be observed. Persons commonly speak as if the other world did not exist now, but would after death. No: it exists now, though we see it not. It is among us and around us. Jacob was shown this in his dream. Angels were all about him, though he knew it not. And what Jacob saw in his sleep, that Elisha's servant saw as if with his eyes; and the shepherds, at the time of the Nativity, not only saw, but heard. They heard the voices of those blessed spirits who praise God day and night, and whom we, in our lower state of being, are allowed to copy and assist.

We are then in a world of spirits, as well as in a world of sense, and we hold communion with it, and take part in it, though we are not conscious of doing so. If this seems strange to any one, let him reflect that we are undeniably taking part in a third world, which we do indeed see, but about which we do not know more than about the Angelic hosts,—the world of brute animals. Can any thing be more marvellous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a

* Heb. i. 14.

† Gen. xxviii. 11.

race of beings about us whom we do but see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests, or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon. It is indeed a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds on it, that we familiarly use, I may say hold intercourse with creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious, as if they were the fabulous, unearthly beings, more powerful than man, yet his slaves, which Eastern superstitions have invented. We have more real knowledge about the Angels than about the brutes. They have apparently passions, habits, and a certain accountableness, but all is mystery about them. We do not know whether they can sin or not, whether they are under punishment, whether they are to live after this life. We inflict very great sufferings on a portion of them, and they in turn, every now and then, seem to retaliate upon us, as if by a wonderful law. We depend on them in various important ways; we use their labour, we eat their flesh. This however relates to such of them as come near us: cast your thoughts abroad on the whole number of them, large and small, in vast forests, or in the water, or in the air; and then say whether the presence of some countless multitudes, so various in their natures, so strange and wild in their shapes, living on the earth without ascertainable object, is not as mysterious as any thing which Scripture says about the Angels? Is it not plain to our senses that there is a world inferior to us in the scale of beings, with which we are connected without understanding what it is? and is it difficult to faith to admit the word of Scripture concerning our connection with a world superior to us?

When, indeed, persons feel it so difficult to conceive the existence among us of the world of spirits, because they are not aware of it, they should recollect how many worlds all at once are in fact contained in human society itself. We speak of the political world, the scientific, the learned, the literary, the religious world; and suitably; for men are so closely united with some men, and so divided from others, they have such distinct objects of pursuit one from another, and such distinct principles and engagements in consequence, that in one and the same place there exist together a number of circles or (as they may be called) worlds, made up of visible men, but themselves invisible. unknown, nay, unintelligible to each other. Men move about in the common paths of life, and look the same; but there is little community of feeling between them; each knows little about what goes on in any other sphere than his own; and a stranger coming into any neighbourhood would, according to his own pursuits or acquaintances, go away with an utterly distinct, or a reverse impression of it, viewed as a whole. Or again, leave for a while the political and commercial excitement of

some large city, and take refuge in a secluded village ; and there, in the absence of the news of the day, consider the mode of life and habits of mind, the employments and views of its inhabitants ; and say whether the world, when regarded in its separate portions, is not more unlike itself than it is unlike the world of Angels which Scripture places in the midst of it ?

The world of spirits then, though unseen, is present ; present, not future, not distant. It is not above the sky, it is not beyond the grave ; it is now and here ; the kingdom of God is among us. Of this the text speaks ;—" We look," says St. Paul, " not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." You see he regarded it as a practical truth, which was to influence our conduct. Not only does he speak of things invisible, but of the duty of " looking at" them ; not only does he contrast the things of time with them, but says that their belonging to time is a reason, not for looking at, but for looking off them. Eternity was not distant because it reached to the future ; nor the unseen state without its influence on us, because it was impalpable. In like manner, he says in another Epistle, " Our conversation is in heaven." And again, " God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And again, " Your life is hid with Christ in God." And to the same purport are St. Peter's words, " Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And again, St. Paul speaking of the Apostles, " We are made a spectacle unto the world, and to Angels, and to men." And again in words already quoted, he speaks of the Angels as " ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation."*

Such is the hidden kingdom of God ; and, as it is now hidden, so in due season it shall be revealed. Men think that they are lords of the world, and may do as they will. They think this earth their property, and its movements in their power, whereas it has other lords besides them, and is the scene of a higher conflict than they are capable of conceiving. It contains Christ's little ones whom they despise, and His Angels whom they disbelieve ; and these at length shall take possession of it and be manifested. At present, " all things," to appearance, " continue as they were from the beginning of the creation ;" and scoffers ask, " Where is the promise of His coming ?" but at the appointed time there will be a " manifestation of the sons of God," and the hidden

* Phil. iii. 20. Eph. ii. 6. Col. iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 9. Heb. i. 14.

saints shall "shine out as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." When the Angels appeared to the shepherds, it was a sudden appearance,—"*Sudden*ly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host." How wonderful a sight! The night had before that seemed just like any other night; as the evening on which Jacob saw the vision seemed like any other evening. They were keeping watch over their sheep; they were watching the night as it passed. The stars moved on,—it was midnight. They had no idea of such a thing when the Angel appeared. Such are the power and virtue hidden in things which are seen, and at God's will they are manifested. They were manifested for a moment to Jacob, for a moment to Elisha's servant, for a moment to the shepherds. They will be manifested for ever when Christ comes at the Last Day "in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels." Then this world will fade away, and the other world will shine forth.

Let these be your thoughts, my brethren, especially in the spring season, when the whole face of nature is so rich and beautiful. Once only in the year, yet once, does the world which we see show forth its hidden powers, and in a manner manifest itself. Then the leaves come out, and the blossoms on the fruit trees, and flowers; and the grass and corn spring up. There is a sudden rush and burst outwardly of that hidden life which God has lodged in the material world. Well, that shows you, as by a sample, what it can do at God's command, when He gives the word. This earth, which now buds forth in leaves and blossoms, will one day burst forth into a new world of light and glory, in which we shall see Saints and Angels dwelling. Who would think, except from his experience of former springs all through his life, who could conceive two or three months before, that it was possible that the face of nature which then seemed so lifeless, should become so splendid and varied? How different is a tree, how different is a prospect, when leaves are on it and off it. How unlikely it would seem, before the event, that the dry and naked branches should suddenly be clothed with what is so bright and so refreshing! yet in God's good time leaves come on the trees. The season may delay, but come it will at last. So it is with the coming of that Eternal Spring, for which all Christians are waiting. Come it will, though it delay; yet though it tarry, let us wait for it, "because it will surely come, it will not tarry." Therefore we say day by day, "Thy kingdom come;" which means,—O Lord, show Thyself; manifest Thyself; Thou that sittest between the cherubim, show Thyself; stir up Thy strength, and come and help us. The earth that we see does not satisfy us; it is but a beginning; it is but a promise of something beyond it; even when it is gayest, with all

its blossoms on, and shows most touchingly what lies hid in it, yet it is not enough. We know much more lies hid in it than we see. A world of Saints and Angels, a glorious world, the palace of God, the mountain of the Lord of Hosts, the Heavenly Jerusalem, the throne of God and Christ, all these wonders, everlasting, all-precious, mysterious, and incomprehensible, lie hid in what we see. What we see is the outward shell of an eternal kingdom; and on that kingdom we fix the eyes of our faith. Shine forth, O Lord, as when on Thy nativity Thine Angels visited the shepherds; let Thy glory blossom forth as bloom and foliage on the trees; change with Thy mighty power this visible world into that diviner world, which as yet we see not; destroy what we see, that it may pass and be transformed into what we believe. Bright as is the sun, and the sky, and the clouds; green as are the leaves and the fields; sweet as is the singing of the birds; we know that they are not all, and we will not take up with a part for the whole. They proceed from a centre of love and goodness, which is God Himself; but they are not His fulness; they speak of heaven, but they are not heaven; they are but as stray beams and dim reflections of His Image; they are but crumbs from the table. We are looking for the coming of the day of God, when all this outward world, fair though it be, shall perish; when the heavens shall be burnt, and the earth melt away. We can bear the loss, for we know it will be but the removing of a veil. We know that to remove the world which is seen, will be the manifestation of the world which is not seen. We know that what we see is as a screen hiding from us God and Christ, and His Saints and Angels. And we earnestly desire and pray for the dissolution of all that we see, from our love and longing after that which we do not see.

O blessed they indeed, who are destined for the sight of those wonders in which they now stand, at which they now look, but which they do not recognize! Blessed they who shall at length behold what as yet mortal eye hath not seen, and faith only enjoys! Those wonderful things of the new world are even now as they shall be then. They are immortal and eternal; and they who shall then be made conscious of them, will see them in their calmness and their majesty where they ever have been. But who can express the surprise and rapture which will come upon those who then at least apprehend them for the first time, and to whose perceptions they are new! Who can imagine by a stretch of fancy the feelings of those who, having died in faith, wake up to enjoyment! The life then begun, we know, will last for ever; yet surely if memory be to us then what it is now, that will be a day much to be observed unto the Lord through all the ages of eternity. We may increase indeed for ever in knowledge and in love, still that

first waking from the dead, the day at once of our birth and our espousals, will ever be endeared and hallowed in our thoughts. When we find ourselves after long rest gifted with fresh powers, vigorous with the seed of eternal life within us, able to love God as we wish, conscious that all trouble, sorrow, pain, anxiety, bereavement, is over for ever, blest in the full affection of those earthly friends whom we loved so poorly, and could protect so feebly, while they were with us in the flesh, and above all visited by the immediate visible ineffable Presence of God Almighty, with His Only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Co-equal Co-eternal Spirit, that great sight in which is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore,—what deep, incommunicable, unimaginable thoughts will be then upon us! what depths will be stirred up within us! what secret harmonies awakened, of which human nature seemed incapable! Earthly words are indeed all worthless to minister to such high anticipations. Let us close our eyes and keep silence.

“All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.”*

S E R M O N X I V

THE GREATNESS AND LITTLENESS OF HUMAN LIFE.

GENESIS xlvii. 9.

The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been: and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage.

WHY did the aged Patriarch call his days few, who had lived twice as long as men now live, when he spoke? why did he call them evil, seeing he had on the whole lived in riches and honour, and, what is more,

* Isai. xl. 6—8.

in God's favour? yet he described his time as short, his days as evil, and his life as but a pilgrimage. Or if we allow that his afflictions were such as to make him reasonably think cheaply of his life, in spite of the blessings which attended it, yet that he should call it short, considering he had so much more time for the highest purposes of his being than we have, is at first sight surprising. He alludes indeed to the longer life which had been granted to his fathers, and perhaps felt a decrepitude greater than theirs had been; yet this difference between him and them could hardly be the real ground of his complaint in the text, or more than a confirmation or occasion of it. It was not because Abraham had lived one hundred and seventy-five years, and Isaac one hundred and eighty, and he himself, whose life was not yet finished, but one hundred and thirty, that he made this mournful speech. For it matters not when time is gone what length it has been; and this doubtless was the real cause why the Patriarch spoke as he did, not because his life was shorter than his fathers', but because it was well nigh gone. When life is past, it is all one whether it has lasted two hundred years or fifty. And it is this characteristic, stamped on human life in the day of its birth, viz. that it is mortal, which makes it under all circumstances and in every form equally feeble and despicable. All the points in which men differ, health and strength, high or low estate, happiness or misery, vanish before this common lot, mortality. Pass a few years, and the longest-lived will be gone; nor will what is past profit him then, except in its consequences.

And this sense of the nothingness of life, impressed on us by the very fact that it comes to an end, is much deepened, when we contrast it with the capabilities of us who live it. Had Jacob lived Methuselah's age, he would have called it short. This is what we all feel, though at first sight it seems a contradiction, that even though the days as they go be slow, and be laden with many events, or with sorrows or dreariness, lengthening them out and making them tedious, yet the year passes quick though the hours tarry, and time by-gone is as a dream, though we thought it would never go while it was going. And the reason seems to be this; that, when we contemplate human life in itself, in however small a portion of it, we see implied in it the presence of a soul, the energy of a spiritual existence, of an accountable being; consciousness tells us this concerning it every moment. But when we look back on it in memory, we view it but externally, as a mere lapse of time, as a mere earthly history. And the longest duration of this external world is as dust and weighs nothing, against one moment's life of the world within. Thus we are ever expecting great things from life, from our internal consciousness every moment of our having souls;

and we are ever being disappointed, on considering what we have gained from time past, and can hope from time to come. And life is ever promising and never fulfilling; and hence, however long it be, our days are few and evil. This is the particular view of the subject on which I shall now dwell.

Our earthly life then gives promise of what it does not accomplish. It promises immortality, yet it is mortal; it contains life in death and eternity in time; and it attracts us by beginnings which faith alone brings to an end. I mean when we take into account the power, with which our souls are gifted as Christians, the very consciousness of these fills us with a certainty that they must last beyond this life; that is, in the case of good and holy men, whose present state, I say, is to them who know them well, an earnest of immortality. The greatness of their gifts, contrasted with their scanty time for exercising them, forces the mind forward to the thought of another life, as almost the necessary counterpart and consequence of this life, and certainly implied in this life, provided there be a righteous Governor of the world, who does not make man for nought.

This is the thought which will come upon us, not always, but under circumstances. And many perhaps of those who at first hearing may think they never felt it, may recognise what I mean, while as I describe it.

I mean, when one sees some excellent person, whose graces we know, whose kindliness, affectionateness, tenderness, and generosity,—when we see him dying, (let him have lived ever so long; I am not supposing a premature death; let him live out his days,) the thought is forced upon us with a sort of surprise: “Surely, he is not to die yet; he has not yet had any opportunity of exercising duly those excellent gifts with which God has endowed him.” Let him have lived seventy or eighty years, yet it seems as if he had done nothing at all, and his life were scarcely begun. He has lived all his days perhaps in a private sphere; he has been engaged on a number of petty matters which died with the day, and yielded no apparent fruit. He has had just enough of trial under various circumstances, to evidence, but not adequately to employ, what was in him. He has, we perhaps perceive, a noble benevolence of mind, a warmth of heart, and a beneficent temper, which, had it the means, would scatter blessings on every side; yet he has never been rich,—he dies poor. We have been accustomed to say to ourselves, “What would such a one be were he wealthy,” not as fancying he ever *will* have riches, but from feeling how he would become them; yet when he actually does die as he lived, without them, we feel somehow, disappointed,—there has been a failure,—his mind, we think, has never

reached its scope,—he has had a treasure within him which has never been used. His days have been but few and evil, and have become old out of season, compared with his capabilities; and we are driven from a sense of them, to look on to a future state as a time when they will be brought out and come into effect. I am not attempting by such reflections to prove that there is a future state; let us take that for granted. I mean, over and above our positive belief in this great truth, we are actually driven to a belief, we attain a sort of sensible conviction of that life to come, a certainty striking home to our hearts and piercing them, by this imperfection in what is present. The very greatness of our powers makes this life look pitiful; the very pitifulness of this life forces on our thoughts to another; and the prospect of another gives a dignity and value to this life which promises it; and thus this life is at once great and little, and we rightly condemn it while we exalt its importance.

And, if this life is short, even when longest, from the great disproportion between it and the powers of regenerate man, still more is this the case, of course, where it is short, and death comes prematurely. Men there are, who, in a single moment of their lives, have shown a superhuman height and majesty of mind which it would take ages for them to employ on its proper objects, and, as it were, to exhaust; and who, by such passing flashes, like rays of the sun, and the darting of lightning, give token of their immortality, give token to us that they are but Angels in disguise, the elect of God sealed for eternal life, and destined to judge the world and to reign with Christ for ever. Yet they are suddenly taken away, and we have hardly recognized them when we lose them. Can we believe that they are not removed for higher things elsewhere? This is sometimes said with reference to our intellectual powers; but it is still more true of our moral nature. There is something in moral truth and goodness, in faith, in firmness, in heavenly-mindedness, in meekness, in courage, in loving-kindness, to which this world's circumstances are quite unequal, for which the longest life is insufficient, which makes the highest opportunities of this world disappointing, which must burst the prison of this world to have its appropriate range. So that when a good man dies, one is led to say, "He has not half showed himself, he has had nothing to exercise him; his days are gone like a shadow, and he is withered like grass."

I say the word "disappointing" is the only word to express our feelings on the death of God's saints. Unless our faith be very active so as to pierce beyond the grave, and realize the future, we feel depressed at what seems like a failure of great things. And from this very feeling surely, by a sort of contradiction, we may fairly take hope; for if

this life be so disappointing, so unfinished, surely it is not the whole. This feeling of disappointment will often come upon us in an especial way, on happening to hear of or to witness the death-beds of holy men. The hour of death seems to be a season, of which, in the hands of Providence, much might be *made*, if I may use the term ; much might be done for the glory of God, the good of man, and the manifestation of the person dying. And beforehand friends will perhaps look forward, and expect that great things are then to take place, which they shall never forget. Yet, “how dieth the wise man? as the fool.”* Such is the preacher’s experience, and our own bears witness to it. King Josiah, the zealous servant of the Living God, died the death of wicked Ahab, the worshipper of Baal. True Christians die as other men. One dies by a sudden accident, another in battle, another without friends to see how he dies, a fourth is insensible or not himself. Thus the opportunity seems thrown away, and we are forcibly reminded that “the manifestation of the sons of God”† is hereafter ; that “the earnest expectation of the creature” is but waiting for it ; that this life is unequal to the burden of so great an office as the due exhibition of those secret ones who shall one day “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”‡

But further, (if it be allowable to speculate,) one can conceive even the same kind of feeling, and a most transporting one, to come over the soul of the faithful Christian, when just separated from the body and conscious that his trial is once for all over. Though his life has been a long and painful discipline, yet when it is over, we may suppose him to feel at the moment the same sort of surprise at its being ended, as generally follows any exertion in this life, when the object is gained and the anticipation over. When we have wound up our minds for any point of time, any great event, an interview with strangers, or the sight of some wonder, or the occasion of some unusual trial, when it comes, and is gone, we have a strange reverse of feeling from our changed circumstances. Such, but without any mixture of pain, without any lassitude, dulness, or disappointment, may be the happy contemplation of the disembodied spirit ; as if it said to itself, “So all is now over ; this is what I have so long waited for ; for which I have nerved myself ; against which I have prepared, fasted, prayed, and wrought righteousness. Death is come and gone,—it is over. Ah ! is it possible ? What an easy trial, what a cheap price for eternal glory ! A few sharp sicknesses, or some acute pain awhile, or some few and evil years, or some struggles of mind, dreary desolateness for a season,

* Eccles. ii. 16.

† Rom. viii. 19.

‡ Matt. xiii. 43.

fightings and fears, afflicting bereavements, or the scorn and ill-usage of the world,—how they fretted me, how much I thought of them, yet how little really they are ! How contemptible a thing is human life, —contemptible in itself, yet in its effects invaluable ! for it has been to me like a small seed of easy purchase, germinating and ripening into bliss everlasting.”

Such being the unprofitableness of this life, viewed in itself, it is plain how we should regard it while we go through it. We should remember that is scarcely more than an accident of our being,—that it is no part of ourselves, who are immortal ; that we are immortal spirits, independent of time and space, and that this life is but a sort of outward stage, on which we act for a time, and which is only sufficient and only intended to answer the purpose of trying whether we will serve God or no. We should consider ourselves to be in this world in no fuller sense than players in any game are in the game ; and life to be a sort of dream, as detached and as different from our real external existence, as a dream differs from waking ; a serious dream, indeed, as affording a means of judging us, yet in itself a kind of shadow, without substance, a scene set before us, in which we seem to be, and in which it is our duty to act just as if all we saw had a truth and reality, because all that meets us influences us and our destiny. The regenerate soul is taken into communion with Saints and Angels, and its “life is hid with Christ in God ;”* it has a place in God’s court, and is not of this world,—looking into this world as a spectator might look at some show or pageant, except when called from time to time to take a part. And while it obeys the instinct of the senses, it does so for God’s sake, and it submits itself to things of time so far as to be perfected by them, that when the veil is withdrawn and it sees itself to be, where it ever has been, in God’s kingdom, it may be found worthy to enjoy it. It is this view of life, which removes from us all surprise and disappointment that it is so incomplete : as well might we expect any chance event which happens in the course of it to be complete, any casual conversation with a stranger, or the toil or amusement of an hour.

Let us then thus account of our present state : it is precious as revealing to us, amid shadows and figures, the existence and attributes of Almighty God and His elect people : it is precious, because it enables us to hold intercourse with immortal souls who are on their trial, as we are. It is momentous, as being the scene and means of our trial ; but beyond this it has no claims upon us. “Vanity of vanities, saith the

* Col. iii. 3.

Preacher, all is vanity." We may be poor or rich, young or old, honoured or slighted, and it ought to affect us no more, neither to elate us nor depress us, than if we were actors in a play, who know that the characters they represent are not their own, and that though they may appear to be superior one to another, to be kings or to be peasants, they are in reality all on a level. The one desire which should move us should be, first of all, that of seeing Him face to face, who is now hid from us; and, next, of enjoying eternal and direct communion, in and through Him, with our friends around us, whom at present we know only through the medium of sense, by precarious and partial channels, which give us little insight into their hearts.

These are suitable feelings towards this attractive but deceitful world. What have we to do with its gifts and honours, who have been already baptized into the world to come, and are no longer citizens of this? Why should we be anxious for a long life, or wealth, or credit, or comfort, who know that the next world will be every thing which our hearts can wish, and that not in appearance only, but truly and everlastingly? Why should we rest in this world, when it is the token and promise of another? Why should we be content with its surface, instead of appropriating what is stored beneath it? To those who live by faith, every thing they see speaks of that future world; the very glories of nature, the sun, moon, and stars, and the richness and the beauty of the earth are as types and figures witnessing and teaching the invisible things of God. All that we see is destined one day to burst forth into a heavenly bloom, and to be transfigured into immortal glory. Heaven at present is out of sight,⁹ but in due time, as snow melts and discovers what it lay upon, so will this visible creation fade away before those greater splendours which are behind it, and on which at present it depends. In that day shadows will retire, and the substance show itself. The sun will grow pale and be lost in the sky, but it will be before the radiance of Him whom it does but image, the Sun of Righteousness, with healing on His wings, who will come forth in visible form, as a bridegroom out of his chamber, as His perishable type decays. The stars which surround it will be replaced by Saints and Angels circling His throne. Above and below, the clouds of the air, the trees of the field, the waters of the great deep will be found impregnated with the forms of everlasting spirits, the servants of God which do His pleasure. And our own mortal bodies will then be found in like manner to contain within them an inner man, which at present exists but in germ; and which will then receive its due proportions, as the soul's harmonious organ, instead of that gross mass of flesh and blood which sight and touch are sensible of. For this glorious manifestation the whole crea-

tion is at present in travail, earnestly desiring that it may be accomplished in its season.

These are thoughts to make us eagerly and devoutly say, "Come, Lord Jesus, to end the time of waiting, of darkness, of turbulence, of disputing, of sorrow, of care." These are thoughts to lead us to rejoice in every day and hour that passes as bringing us nearer the time of His appearing, and the termination of sin and misery. They are thoughts which ought thus to affect us ; and so they would, were it not for the load of guilt which weighs upon us, for sins committed against light and grace. O that it were otherwise with us ! O that we were fitted duly to receive this lesson which the world gives us, and had so improved the gift of life, that while we felt it to be perishing, we might rejoice in it as precious ! O that we were not conscious of deep stains upon our souls, the accumulations of past years, and of infirmities continually besetting us ! Were it not for all this,—were it not for our unprepared state, as in one sense it may truly be called, how gladly should we hail each new month and year as a token that our Saviour is so much nearer to us than He ever has been yet ! May He grant His grace abundantly to us, to make us meet for His presence, that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming ! May He vouchsafe to us the full grace of His Ordinances ; may He feed us with His choicest gifts : may He expel the poison from our souls : may He wash us clean in His precious blood, and give us the fulness of faith, love, and hope, as foretastes of the heavenly portion which He destines for us !

SERMON XV.

MORAL EFFECTS OF COMMUNION WITH GOD.

PSALM xxvii. 4.

One thing have I desired of the Lord, which I will require ; even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His Temple.

WHAT the Psalmist desired, we Christians enjoy to the full,—the liberty of holding communion with God in His Temple all through our life. Under the Law, the presence of God was but in one place ; and therefore could be approached and enjoyed only at set times. For far the greater part of their lives, the chosen people were in one sense “cast out of the sight of His eyes ;”^{*} and the periodical return to it which they were allowed, was a privilege highly coveted and earnestly expected. Much more precious was the privilege of continually dwelling in His sight, which is spoken of in the text. “One thing,” says the Psalmist, “have I desired of the Lord. . . . that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to visit His Temple.” He desired to have continually that communion with God in prayer, praise, and meditation, to which His presence gives opportunity ; and this, I say, is the portion of Christians. Faith opens upon us Christians the Temple of God, wherever we are ; for that Temple is a spiritual one, and is so every where present. “We have access,” says the Apostle,—that is, we have admission or introduction, “by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” And hence he says elsewhere, “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say. Rejoice.” “Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing ; in every thing give thanks.” And St. James, “Is any afflicted ? let him pray : is any merry ? let him sing psalms.”[†]

^{*} Psalm xxxi. 24.

[†] Rom. v. 2. Phil. iv. 4. 1 Thess. v. 16—18. James v. 13.

Prayer, praise, thanksgiving, contemplation, are the peculiar privilege and duty of a Christian, and that for their own sakes, from the exceeding comfort and satisfaction they afford him, and without reference to any definite results to which prayer tends, without reference to the answers which are promised to it, from a general sense of the blessedness of being under the shadow of God's throne.

I propose, then, in what follows to make some remarks on communion with God, or prayer in a large sense of the word ; not as regards its external consequences, but as it may be considered to affect our own minds and hearts.

What, then, is prayer? It is (if it may be said reverently) *conversing* with God. We converse with our fellow-men, and then we use familiar language, because they *are* our fellows. We converse with God, and then we use the lowliest, awfulest, calmest, concisest language we can, because He *is* God. Prayer, then, is *divine* converse, differing from human, as God differs from man. Thus St. Paul says, "Our conversation is in heaven"*—not indeed thereby meaning converse of words only, but intercourse and mode of life generally ; yet still in an especial way converse of words or prayer, because language is the special means of all intercourse. Our intercourse with our fellow-men goes on, not by sight, but by sound, not by eyes, but by ears. Hearing is the social sense, and language is the social bond. In like manner, as the Christian's conversation is in heaven, as it is his duty, with Enoch and other saints, *to walk with God*, so his voice is in heaven, his heart "inditing of a good matter," of prayers and praises. Prayers and praises are the mode of his intercourse with the next world, as the converse of business or recreation is the mode in which this world is carried on in all its separate courses. He who does not pray, does not claim his citizenship with heaven, but lives, though an heir of the kingdom, as if he were a child of earth.

Now, it is not surprising if that duty or privilege, which is the characteristic token of our heavenly inheritance, should also have an especial influence upon our fitness for claiming it. He who does not use a gift, loses it ; the man who does not use his voice or limbs, loses power over them, and becomes disqualified for the state of life to which he is called. In like manner, he who neglects to pray, not only suspends the enjoyment, but is in a way to lose the possession of his divine citizenship. We are members of another world ; we have been severed from the companionship of devils, and brought into that invisible kingdom of Christ which faith alone discerns,—that Mysterious Presence of God,

* Phil. iii. 20.

which encompasses us, which is in us and around us, which is in our heart, which enfolds us as though with a robe of light, hiding our scarred and discoloured souls from the sight of Divine Purity, and making them shining as the Angels ; and which meets us too in all forms of beauty and grace which this visible world contains, in a starry host or (if I may say so) a milky way of divine companions, the inhabitants of Mount Zion, where we dwell. Faith, I say, alone apprehends all this ; but yet there *is* something which is not left to faith,—our own tastes, likings, motives, and habits. Of these we are conscious in our degree, and we can make ourselves more and more conscious ; and as consciousness tells us what they are, reason tells us whether they are such as become, as correspond with, that heavenly world into which we have been translated.

I say then, it is plain to common sense, that the man who has not accustomed himself to the language of heaven will be no fit inhabitant of it when, in the Last Day, it is perceptibly revealed. The case is like that of a language or style of speaking of this world ; we know well a foreigner from a native. Again, we know those who have been used to kings' courts or educated society, from others. By their voice, accent, and language, and not only so, by their gestures and gait, by their usages, by their mode of conducting themselves and their principles of conduct, we know well what a vast difference there is between those who have lived in good society and those who have not. What indeed is called "*good* society" is often very worthless society. I am not speaking of it to praise it ; I only mean, that as what men call refined or courtly manners, are gained only by intercourse with courts and polished circles, and as the influence of the words there used, (that is, of the ideas which those words, striking again and again on the ear, convey to the mind,) extends in a most subtle way over all that men do, over the turn of their sentences, and the tone of their questions and replies, and their general bearing, and the spontaneous flow of their thoughts, and their mode of viewing things, and the general maxims or heads to which they refer them, and the motives which determine them, and the likings and dislikings, hopes and fears, and their relative estimate of persons, and the intensity of their perceptions towards particular objects ; so a habit of prayer, the practice of turning to God and the unseen world, in every season, in every place, in every emergency, (let alone its supernatural effect of prevailing with God)—prayer, I say, has what may be called a *natural* effect, in spiritualizing and elevating the soul. A man is no longer what he was before ; gradually, imperceptibly to himself, he has imbibed a new set of ideas, and become

imbued with fresh principles. He is one coming from kings' courts, with a grace, a delicacy, a dignity, a propriety, a justness of thought and taste, a clearness and firmness of principle, all his own. Such is the power of God's secret grace acting through those ordinances which he has enjoined us; such the evident fitness of those ordinances to produce the results which they set before us. As speech is the organ of human society, and the means of human civilization, so is prayer the instrument of divine fellowship and divine training.

I will give, for the sake of illustration, some instances in detail of one particular fault of mind, which among others a habit of prayer is calculated to cure. Many a man seems to have no grasp at all of doctrinal truth. He cannot get himself to think it of importance what a man believes, and what not. He tries to do so; for a time he does; he does for a time think that a certain faith is necessary for salvation, that certain doctrines are to be put forth and maintained in charity to the souls of men. Yet though he thinks so one day, he changes the next; he holds the truth, and then lets it go again. He is filled with doubts; suddenly the question crosses him, "Is it possible that such and such a doctrine is necessary?" and he relapses into an uncomfortable sceptical state, out of which there is no outlet. Reasonings do not convince him; he *cannot* be convinced; he has no grasp of truth. Why? Because the next world is not a reality to him; it only exists in his mind in the form of certain conclusions from certain reasonings. It is but an inference; and never can be more, never can be present to his mind, until he acts, instead of arguing. Let him but act as if the next world were before him; let him but give himself to such devotional exercises as we ought to observe in the presence of an Almighty, All-holy, and All-merciful God, and it will be a rare case indeed if his difficulties do not vanish.

Or again: a man may have a natural tendency towards caprice and change; he may be apt to take up first one fancy, then another, from novelty or other reason; to take sudden likings or dislikings, or be tempted to form a scheme of religion for himself, of what he thinks best or most beautiful out of all the systems which divide the world.

Again: he is troubled perhaps with a variety of unbecoming thoughts, which he would fain keep out of his mind if he could. He finds himself unsettled and uneasy, dissatisfied with his condition, easily excited, sorry at sin one moment, forgetting it the next, feeble-minded, unable to rule himself, tempted to dote upon trifles, apt to be caught and influenced by vanities, and to abandon himself to languor or indolence.

Once more: he has not a clear perception of the path of truth and duty. This is an especial fault among us now-a-days: men are actu-

ated perhaps by the best feelings and the most amiable motives, and are not fairly chargeable with insincerity ; and yet there is a want of straightforwardness in their conduct. They allow themselves to be guided by expediency, and defend themselves, and perhaps so plausibly, that though you are not convinced, you are silenced. They attend to what others think, more than to what God says ; they look at Scripture more as a gift to man than as a gift from God ; they consider themselves at liberty to modify its plain precepts by a certain discretionary rule ; they listen to the voice of great men, and allow themselves to be swayed by them ; they make comparisons and strike the balance between the impracticability of the whole that God commands, and the practicability of effecting a part, and think they may consent to give up something, if they can secure the rest. They shift about in opinion, going first a little this way, then a little that, according to the loudness and positiveness with which others speak ; they are at the mercy of the last speaker, and they think they observe a safe, judicious, and middle course, by always keeping a certain distance behind those who go furthest. Or they are rash in their religious projects and undertakings, and forget that they may be violating the lines and fences of God's law, while they move about freely at their pleasure. Now, I will not judge another ; I will not say that in this or that given case the fault of mind in question, (for any how it is a fault,) does certainly arise from certain cause which I choose to guess at ; but at least there *are* cases where this wavering of mind *does* arise from scantiness of prayer ; and if so, it is worth a man's considering, who is thus unsteady, timid, and dimsighted, whether this scantity be not perchance the true reason of such infirmities in his own case, and whether an "instant continuance in prayer,"—by which I mean, not merely prayer morning and evening, but something suitable to his disease, something extraordinary, as medicine is extraordinary, a "redeeming of time" from society and recreation in order to pray more,—whether such a change in his habits would not remove them ?

For what is the very promise of the New Covenant but stability ? what is it, but a clear insight into the truth, such as will enable us to know how to walk, how to profess, how to meet the circumstances of life, how to withstand gainsayers ? Are we built upon a rock or upon the sand ? are we after all tossed about on the sea of opinion, when Christ has stretched out His hand to us, to help and encourage us ? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."* Such is the word of promise. Can we

* Is. xxvi. 3.

possibly have apprehensions about what man will do to us or say of us, can we flatter the great ones of earth, or timidly yield to the many, or be dazzled by talent, or drawn aside by interest, who are in the habit of divine conversations? "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," says St. John, "and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. . . . The anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you. . . . Who-soever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* This is that birth, by which the baptized soul not only enters, but actually embraces and realizes the kingdom of God. This is the true and effectual regeneration, when the seed of life takes root in man and thrives. Such men have accustomed themselves to speak to God, and God has ever spoken to them; and they feel "the powers of the world to come" as truly as they feel the presence of this world, because they have been accustomed to speak and act as if it were real. All of us must rely on something; all must look up to, admire, court, make themselves one with something. Most men cast in their lot with the visible world; but true Christians with Saints and Angels. Such men are little understood by the world, because they are not of the world; and hence it sometimes happens that even the better sort of men are often disconcerted and vexed by them. It cannot be otherwise; they move forward on principles so different from what are commonly assumed as true. They take for granted, as first principles, what the world wishes to have proved in detail. They have become familiar with the sights of the next world, till they talk of them as if all men admitted them.

The immortality of truth, its oneness, the impossibility of falsehood coalescing with it, what is truth, what it should lead one to do in particular cases, how it lies in the details of life,—all these points are mere matters of debate in the world, and men go through long processes of argument, and pride themselves on their subtleness in defending or attacking, in making probable or improbable, what is assumed without a word by those who have lived in heaven, as the very ground to start from. In consequence, such men are called bad disputants, inconsecutive reasoners, strange, eccentric, or perverse thinkers, merely because they do not take for granted, nor go to prove what others do,—because they do not go about to define and determine the sights, (as it were,) the mountains and rivers and plains, and sun, moon, and stars of the next world. And hence in turn they are commonly unable to

* 1 John ii. 20, 21. 27; iii. 9.

enter into the ways of thought or feelings of other men, having been engrossed with God's thoughts and God's ways. Hence, perhaps, they seem abrupt in what they say and do; nay, even make others feel constrained and uneasy in their presence. Perhaps they appear reserved too, because they take so much for granted which might be drawn out, and because they cannot bring themselves to tell all their thoughts from their sacredness, and because they are drawn off from free conversation to the thought of heaven, on which their minds rest. Nay, perchance, they appear severe, because their motives are not understood, nor their sensitive jealousy for the honour of God, and their charitable concern for the good of their fellow-Christians duly appreciated. In short, to the world they seem like *foreigners*. We know how foreigners strike us; they are often to *our* notions strange and unpleasant in their manners; why is this? merely *because* they are of a different country. Each country has its own manners,—one may not be better than other; but we naturally like our own, and we do not understand other. We do not see their meaning. We misunderstand them; we think they mean something unpleasant, something rude, or over-free, or haughty, or unrefined, when they do not. And in like manner, the world at large, not only is not Christian, but cannot discern or understand the Christian. Thus our Blessed Lord Himself was not recognized or honoured by His relatives, and (as is plain to every reader of Scripture) He often seems to speak abruptly and severely. So too St. Paul was considered by the Corinthians as contemptible in speech. And hence St. John, speaking of "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," adds, "therefore the world *knoweth* us not, because it knew Him not."* Such is the effect of divine meditations: admitting us into the next world, and withdrawing us from this; making us children of God, but withal "strangers unto our brethren, even aliens unto our mother's children."† Yea, though the true servants of God increase in meekness and love day by day, and to those who know them will seem what they really are; and though their good works are evident to all men, and cannot be denied, yet such is the eternal law which goes between the Church and the world—we cannot be friends of both; and they who take their portion with the Church, will seem, except in some remarkable exceptions, unamiable to the world, for the "world *knoweth* them not." and does not like them, though it can hardly tell why; yet (as St. John proceeds) they have this blessing, that "when He shall appear, they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is."‡

* 1 John iii. 1.

† Ps. lxix. 8.

‡ 1 John iii. 2.

And if, as it would seem, we must choose between the two, surely the world's friendship may be parted with than our fellowship with our Lord and Saviour. What indeed have we to do with courting men, whose faces are turned towards God? We know how men feel and act when they come to die; they discharge their worldly affairs from their minds, and try to realize the unseen state. Then this world is nothing to them. It may praise, it may blame; but they feel it not. They are leaving their goods, their deeds, their sayings, their writings, their names, behind them; and they care not for it, for they wait for Christ. To one thing alone they are alive, His coming; they watch against it, if so be, they may then be found without shame. Such is the conduct of dying men; and what all but the very hardened do at the last, if their senses fail not and their powers hold, that does the true Christian all life long. He is ever dying while he lives; he is on his bier, and the prayers for the sick are saying over him. He has no work but that of making his peace with God, and preparing for the judgment. He has no aim but that of being found worthy to escape the things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. And therefore he day by day unlearns the love of this world, and the desire of its praise; he can bear to belong to the nameless family of God, and to seem to the world strange in it and out of place, for so he is.

And when Christ comes at last, blessed indeed will be his lot. He has joined himself from the first to the conquering side; he has risked the present against the future, preferring the chance of eternity to the certainty of time, and then his reward will be but beginning, when that of the children of this world is come to an end. In the words of the wise man, "Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation, so far beyond all that they looked for. And they repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit, shall say within themselves, This is he whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach; we fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honour. How is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!"*

* Wisd. v. 1—5.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST HIDDEN FROM THE WORLD.

JOHN i. v.

The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

OF all the thoughts which rise in the mind when contemplating the sojourn of our Lord Jesus Christ upon earth,* none perhaps is more affecting and subduing than the obscurity which attended it. I do not mean His obscure condition, in the sense of its being humble ; but the obscurity in which he was shrouded, and the secrecy which He observed. This characteristic of His first Advent is referred to very frequently in Scripture, as in the text, “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not ;” and is in contrast with what is foretold about His second Advent. Then “every eye shall see Him ;” which implies that all shall recognize Him ; whereas when He came for the first time, though many saw Him, few indeed discerned Him. It had been prophesied, “When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him ;” and at the very end of His ministry, He said to one of His twelve chosen friends, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip ?”†

I propose to set before you one or two thoughts which arise from this very solemn circumstance, and which may, through God’s blessing, be profitable.

1. And first, let us review some of the circumstances which marked His sojourn when on earth.

His condescension in coming down from heaven, in leaving His Father’s glory and taking flesh, is so far beyond power of words or thought, that one might consider at first sight that it mattered little whether He came as a prince or a beggar. And yet after all, it is much more

* Preached on Christmas day.

† Isa. liii. 2. John xiv. 9.

wonderful that He came in low estate, for this reason ; because it might have been thought beforehand, that, though He condescended to come on earth, yet He would not submit to be overlooked and despised : now the rich are not despised by the world, and the poor are. If He had come as a great prince or noble, the world, without knowing a whit more that He was God, yet would at least have looked up to Him and honoured Him, as being a prince ; but when He came in a low estate, He took upon Him one additional humiliation, *contempt*,—being contemned, scorned, rudely passed by, roughly profaned by His creatures.

What were the actual circumstances of His coming ? His Mother is a poor woman ; she comes to Bethlehem to be taxed, travailing, when her choice would have been to remain at home. She finds there is no room in the inn ; she is obliged to betake herself to a stable ; she brings forth her first-born Son, and lays Him in a manger. That little babe, so born, so placed, is none other than the Creator of heaven and earth, the Eternal Son of God.

Well ; He was born of a poor woman, laid in a manger, brought up to a lowly trade, that of a carpenter ; and when He began to preach the Gospel, He had not a place to lay His head : lastly, He was put to death, to an infamous and odious death, the death which criminals then suffered.

For the three last years of His life, He preached, I say, the Gospel, as we read in Scripture ; but He did not begin to do so till He was thirty years old. For the first thirty years of His life, He seems to have lived, just as a poor man would live now. Day after day, season after season, winter and summer, one year and then another, passed on as might happen to any of us. He passed from being a babe in arms to being a child, and then He became a boy, and so He grew up “like a tender plant,” increasing in wisdom and stature ; and then He seems to have followed the trade of Joseph, His reputed father ; going on in an ordinary way without any great occurrence, till He was thirty years old. How very wonderful is all this ! that He should live here, doing nothing great, so long : living here, as if for the sake of living ; not preaching, or collecting disciples, or apparently in any way furthering the cause which brought Him down from heaven. Doubtless there were deep and wise reasons in God’s counsels for His going on so long in obscurity ; I only mean, that *we* do not know them.

And it is remarkable that those who were about Him, seem to have treated Him as one of their equals. His brethren, that is, His near relations, His cousins, did not believe in Him. And it is very observable, moreover, that when He began to preach, and a multitude collected, we are told, “When His friends heard of it, they went out to lay

hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself.”* They treated Him as we might be disposed, and rightly, to treat any ordinary person now, who began to preach in the streets. I say “rightly,” because such persons generally preach a *new* Gospel, and therefore must be wrong. Also they preach without being sent, and against authority; all which is wrong too. Accordingly we are often tempted to say that such people are “beside themselves,” or mad, and not unjustly. It is often charitable to say so, for it is better to be mad than to be disobedient. Well, what we should say of such persons, this is what our Lord’s friends said of Him. They had lived so long with Him, and yet did not know Him; did not understand what He was. They saw nothing to mark a difference between Him and them. He was dressed as others. He ate and drank as others, He came in and went out, and spoke, and walked, and slept, as others. He was in all respects a man, except that He did not sin; and this great difference the many would not detect, because none of us understands those who are much better than himself: so that Christ, the sinless Son of God, might be living close to us, and we not discover it.

2. I say that Christ, the sinless Son of God, might be living now in the world as our next door neighbour, and perhaps we not find it out. And this is a thought that should be dwelt on. I do not mean to say that there are not a number of persons, who we could be sure were not Christ; of course, no persons who lead bad and irreligious lives. But there are a number of persons who are in no sense irreligious, or open to serious blame, who are very much like each other at first sight, yet in God’s eyes are very different. I mean the great mass of what are called respectable men, who vary very much: some are merely decent and outwardly correct persons, but have no great sense of religion, do not deny themselves, have no ardent love of God, but love the world; and, their interest lying in being regular and orderly, or having no strong passions, or having early got into the way of being regular, and their habits being formed in it, they are what they are, decent and correct, but very little more.

But there are others who look just the same to the world, who in their hearts are very different; they make no great show, they go on in the same quiet ordinary way as the others, but really they are training to be saints in heaven. They do all they can to change themselves, to become like God, to obey God, to discipline themselves, to renounce the world; but they do it in secret, both because God tells them so to do, and because they do not like it to be known. Moreover,

* Mark iii. 21.

there are a number of others between these two, with more or less of worldliness, and more or less of faith. Yet they all look about the same, to common eyes, because true religion is a hidden life in the heart ; and though it cannot exist without deeds, yet these are for the most part secret deeds, secret charities, secret prayers, secret self-denials, secret struggles, secret victories. Of course in proportion as persons are brought out into public life, they will be seen and scrutinized, and (in a certain sense) known more ; but I am talking of the ordinary condition of people in private life, such as our Saviour was for thirty years ; and these look very like each other. And there are so many of them, that unless we get very near them, we cannot see any distinction between one and another ; we have no means to do so, and it is no business of ours. And yet, though we have no right to judge others, but must leave this to God, it is very certain that a really holy man, a true saint, though he looks like other men, still has a sort of secret power in him to attract others to him who are like-minded, and to influence all who have any thing in them like him. And thus it often becomes a test, whether we are like-minded with the Saints of God, whether they have influence over us. And though we have no means of knowing at the time who are God's own Saints, yet after all is over we have ; and then on looking back on what is past, perhaps after they are dead and gone, if we knew them, we may ask ourselves what power they had over us, whether they attracted us, influenced us, humbled us, whether they made our hearts burn within us. Alas ! too often we shall find that we were close to them for a long time, had means of knowing them, and knew them not ; and that is a heavy condemnation on us, indeed. Now this was singularly exemplified in our Saviour's history, by how much He was so very holy. The holier a man is, the less he is understood by men of the world. All who have any spark of living faith will understand something of him, and the holier he is, they will, for the most part, be attracted the more ; but those who serve the world will be blind to him, or scorn and dislike him, the holier he is. This, I say, happened to our Lord. He was all-holy, but "the light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." His near relations did not believe in Him. And if this were so, and for the reason I have said, it surely becomes a question whether we should have understood Him better than they ; whether though He had been our next door neighbour, or one of our family, we should have distinguished Him from any one else, who was correct and quiet in His deportment ; or rather, whether we should not, though we respected Him, (alas, what a word ! what language towards the Most

High God!) yet even if we went as far as this, whether we should not have thought Him strange, eccentric, extravagant and fanciful. Much less should we have detected any sparks of that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and which was merely hidden not quenched by His earthly tabernacle. This, truly, is a very awful thought; because if He were near us for any long time, and we did not see any thing wonderful in Him, we might take it as a clear proof that we were not His, for "His sheep know His voice and follow Him;" we might take it as a clear proof that we should not know Him, or admire His greatness, or adore His glory, or love His excellency, if we were admitted to His presence in heaven.

3. And here we are brought to another most serious thought, to which I will allude. We are very apt to wish we had been born in the days of Christ, and in this way we excuse our misconduct, when conscience reproaches us. We say, that had we had the advantage of being with Christ, we should have had stronger motives, stronger restraints against sin. I answer, that so far from our sinful habits being reformed by the presence of Christ, the chance is, that those same habits would have hindered us from recognising Him. We should not have known He was present; and if He had even told us who He was, we should not have believed Him. Nay, had we seen His miracles, (incredible as it may seem), even they would not have made any lasting impression on us. Without going into this subject, consider only the possibility of Christ being close to us, even though He did no miracle, and our not knowing it; yet I believe this literally would have been the case with most men. But enough on this subject. What I am coming to is this: I wish you to observe what a fearful light this casts upon our prospects in the next world. We think heaven must be a place of happiness to us, if we do but get there; but the great probability is, if we can judge by what goes on on earth, that a bad man, if brought to heaven, would not know he was in heaven;—I do not go to the further question whether, on the contrary, the very fact of his being in heaven with all his unholiness upon him, would not be a literal torment to him, and light up the fires of hell within him. This indeed would be a most dreadful way of finding out where he was. But let us suppose a lighter case: let us suppose he could remain in heaven unblasted, yet it would seem, that at best he would not know that he was there. He would see nothing wonderful there. Could men come nearer to God than when they seized Him, struck Him, spit on Him, hurried Him along, stripped Him, stretched out His limbs upon the cross, nailed Him to it, raised it up, stood gazing on Him, jeered Him, gave Him vinegar, looked close whether He was dead, and then pierced

Him with a spear ? O dreadful thought, that the nearest approaches man has made to God upon earth have been in blasphemy ! Whether of the two came closer to Him, St. Thomas, who was allowed to reach forth his hand, and reverently touch His wounds, and St. John, who rested on His bosom, or the brutal soldiers who profaned Him limb by limb, and tortured Him nerve by nerve ! The Blessed Virgin, indeed, came closer still to Him ; and we, if we be true believers, still closer, who have Him really, though spiritually within us ; but this is another, an inward sort of approach. Of those who approached Him externally, they came nearest, who knew nothing about it. So it is with sinners : they would walk close to the throne of God ; they would stupidly gaze at it ; they would touch it ; they would meddle with the holiest things ; they would go on intruding and prying, not meaning any thing wrong by it, but with a sort of brute curiosity, till the avenging lightnings destroyed them ;—all because they have no *senses* to guide them in the matter. Our bodily senses tell us of the approach of good or evil on earth. By sound, by scent, by feeling, we know what is happening to us. We know when we are exposing ourselves to the weather, when we are exerting ourselves too much. We have warnings, and feel we must not neglect them. Now, sinners have no spiritual senses ; they can presage nothing ; they do not know what is going to happen the next moment to them. So they go fearlessly further and further among precipices, till on a sudden they fall, or are smitten and perish. Miserable beings ! and this is what sin does for immortal souls ; that they should be like the cattle which are slaughtered at the shambles, yet feel and smell the very weapons which are to destroy them !

4. But you may say, how does this concern us ? Christ is not here ; *we* cannot thus or in any less way insult His Majesty. Are we so sure of this ? Certainly we cannot commit such open blasphemy ; but it is another matter whether we cannot commit as great. For often sins are greater which are less startling ; insults more bitter, which are not so loud ; and evils deeper, which are more subtle. Do we not recollect a very awful passage ? “ Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him ; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him.”* Now, I am not deciding whether or not this denunciation can be fulfilled in the case of Christians now, though when we recollect that we *are* at present under the ministration of that very Spirit of whom our Saviour speaks, this is a very serious question ; but I quote it to show that there may be sins greater even than insult and injury offered to Christ’s

* Matt. xii. 32.

Person, though we should think that impossible, and though they could not be so flagrant or open. With this thought let it be considered :—

First, that Christ is still on earth. He said expressly that He would come again. The Holy Ghost's coming is so really His coming, that we might as well say that He was not here in the days of His flesh, when His Body was in this world, as deny that He is here now, when His Divine Spirit is here. This indeed is a mystery, how God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, two Persons, can be one, how He can be in the Spirit and the Spirit in Him ; but so it is.

Next, if He is still on earth, yet is not visible (which cannot be denied), it is plain that He keeps Himself still in the condition which He chose in the days of His flesh. I mean, He is a hidden Saviour, and may be approached (unless we are careful) without due reverence and fear. I say, wherever He is (for that is a further question), still He is here, and again He is secret ; and, whatever be the tokens of His Presence, still they must be of a nature to admit of persons doubting where it is ; and if they will argue, and be sharpwitted and subtle, they may perplex themselves and others, as the Jews did even in the days of His flesh, till He seems to them nowhere present on earth now. And when they come to think Him far away, of course they *feel* it to be impossible so to insult Him as the Jews did of old ; and if nevertheless He *is* here, they *are* perchance approaching and insulting Him, though they so feel. And this was just the case of the Jews, for they too were ignorant what they were doing. It is probable, then, that we can now commit at least as great blasphemy towards Him as the Jews did, first, because we are under the dispensation of that Holy Spirit, against whom even more heinous sins *can* be committed ; next, because His presence as little witnesses of itself, or is impressive to the many, as His bodily presence formerly.

We see a further reason for this apprehension, when we consider what the tokens of His presence now are ; for they will be found to be of a nature easily to lead men into irreverence, unless they be humble and watchful. For instance, the Church is called “ His Body ; ” what His material Body was when He was visible on earth, such is the Church now. It is the instrument of His Divine power ; it is that which we must approach, to gain good from Him ; it is that which by insulting we awaken His anger. Now, what is the Church but, as it were, a body of humiliation, almost provoking insult and profaneness, when men do not live by faith ? an earthen vessel, far more so even than His body of flesh, for that was at least pure from all sin, and the Church is defiled in all her members. We know that her ministers at best are but imperfect and erring, and of like passions with their bre-

thren ; yet of them He has said, speaking not to the Apostles merely but to all the seventy disciples, (to whom Christian ministers are in office surely equal,) “ He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.”

Again : He has made the poor, weak, and afflicted tokens and instruments of His Presence ; and here again, as is plain, the same temptation meets us to neglect or profane it. What He was, such are His chosen followers in this world ; and as his obscure and defenceless state led men to insult and ill-treat Him, so the like qualities, in the tokens of His Presence, lead men to insult Him now. That such are His tokens is plain from many passages of Scripture : for instance, He says of children, “ Whoso shall receive one such child in My Name, receiveth Me.” Again : He said to Saul, who was persecuting His followers, “ Why persecutest thou Me ?” And He forewarns us, that at the Last Day He will say to the righteous, “ I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in ; naked, and ye clothed Me ; I was sick, and ye visited Me ; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.” And He adds, “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”* He observes the same connection between Himself and followers in His words to the wicked. What makes this passage the more awful and apposite, is this, which has been before now noted,† that neither righteous nor wicked *knew* what they had done ; even the righteous are represented as unaware that they had approached Christ. They say, “ Lord, *when* saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee, or thirsty, and gave Thee drink ?” In every age, then, Christ is both in the world, and yet not more publicly so than in the days of His flesh.

And a similar remark applies to His Ordinances, which are at once most simple, yet most intimately connected with Him. St. Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, shows both how easy and how fearful it is to profane the Lord’s Supper, while He states how great the excess of the Corinthians had been, yet also that it was a want of “ *discerning* the Lord’s Body.” When He was born into the world, the world knew it not. He was laid in a rude manger among the cattle, but “ all the Angels of God worshipped Him.” Now too He is present upon a table, homely perhaps in make, and dishonoured in its circumstances ; and faith adores, but the world passes by.

Let us then pray Him ever to enlighten the eyes of our understand-

* Matt. xviii. 5. Acts ix. 4. Matt. xxv. 35—40. † Vide Pascal’s Thoughts.

ing that we may belong to the Heavenly Host, not to this world. As the carnal-minded would not perceive Him even in heaven, so the spiritual heart may approach Him, possess Him, see Him, even upon earth.

S E R M O N X V I I .

CHRIST MANIFESTED IN REMEMBRANCE.

JOHN xvi. 14.

He shall glorify Me.

WHEN our Lord was leaving His Apostles, and they were sorrowful, He consoled them by the promise of another Guide and Teacher, on whom they might rely instead of Him, and who should be more to them even than He had been. He promised them the Third Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Himself and of His Father, who should come invisibly, and with the greater power and comfort, inasmuch as He was invisible; so that His presence would be more real and efficacious by how much it was more secret and inscrutable. At the same time, this new and most gracious Comforter, while bringing a higher blessedness, would not in any degree obscure or hide what had gone before. Though He did more for the Apostles than Christ had done, He would not throw into the shade and supersede Him whom He succeeded. How could that be? who could come greater or holier than the Son of God? who could obscure the Lord of glory? how could the Holy Ghost, who was one with the Son, and the Spirit proceeding from the Son, do otherwise than manifest the Son, while manifesting Himself? how could He fail to illuminate the mercies and perfections of Him, whose death upon the Cross opened a way for Himself, the Holy Ghost, to be gracious to man also? Accordingly, though it was expedient that the Son should go away, in order that the

Comforter might come, the vision of the Son was not hidden, not put out of sight by the presence of the Comforter. On the contrary, Christ expressly announced to the Apostles concerning Him, in the words of the text, "He shall glorify Me."

Now these words lead us first to consider in what special way the Holy Ghost gave glory to the Son of God; and next to inquire whether there is not in this appointment some trace of a general law of Divine Providence, which is observed, as in Scripture, so in the world's affairs. The special way in which God the Holy Ghost gave glory to God the Son, was by manifesting that He was the Only-begotten Son of the Father, who had appeared as the Son of man. Our Saviour said most plainly, that He was the Son of God; but it is one thing to declare the whole truth, another to receive it. Our Saviour said all that need be said, but His Apostles understood Him not. Nay, when they made confession, and that in faith, and by the secret grace of God, and therefore acceptably to Christ, still they understood not fully what they said. St. Peter acknowledged Him as the Christ, the Son of God. So did the centurion who was present at His crucifixion. Did that centurion, when He said, "Truly, this was the Son of God," understand his own words? Surely not. Nor did St. Peter, though he spoke, not through flesh and blood, but by the revelation of the Father. Had he understood, could he so soon after, when our Lord spoke of His passion which lay before Him, have presumed to "take Him, and begin to rebuke Him?" Certainly he did not understand that our Lord, as being the Son of God, was not the creature of God, but the Eternal Word, the Only-begotten Son of the Father, one with Him in substance, distinct in Person.

And when we look into our Saviour's conduct in the days of His flesh, we find that He purposely concealed that knowledge, which yet He gave; as if intending it should be given, but not at once; as if His words should stand, but should wait awhile for their interpretation; as if reserving them for His coming, who at once was to bring Christ and His words into the light. Thus when the young ruler came to Him, and said, "Good Master," He showed Himself more desirous of correcting him than of revealing Himself, desirous to make him weigh his words, rather than Himself to accept them. At another time, when He had so far disclosed Himself that the Jews accused Him of blasphemy, in that He, being a man, made Himself God, far from repeating and insisting on the sacred Truth which they rejected, He withdrew His own expressions, intimating that even the prophets of the Old Testament were called gods as well as He. And when He stood before

Pilate, He refused to bear witness to Himself, or say what He was, or whence He came.

Thus he was among them "as he that serveth." Apparently, it was not till after His resurrection, and especially after His ascension, when the Holy Ghost descended, that the Apostles understood who had been with them. When all was over they knew it, not at the time.

Now here we see, I think, the trace of a general principle, which comes before us again and again both in Scripture and in the world, that God's Presence is not discerned at the time when it is upon us, but afterwards, when we look back upon what is gone and over.

Our Saviour's history itself will supply instances in evidence of the existence of this remarkable law.

St. Philip, for instance, when he asked to see the Almighty Father, little understood the privilege he had so long enjoyed; accordingly, our Lord answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

Again, on another occasion, He said to St. Peter, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."* Again, "These things understood not His disciples at the first, but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things unto Him."†

And in like manner while He talked with the two disciples going to Emmaus, their eyes were holden that they did not know Him. When they recognized Him, at once He vanished out of their sight. *Then* "they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?"‡

Such too are the following, taken from the Old Testament. Jacob, when he fled from his brother, "lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set." In his sleep he saw the vision of Angels, and the Lord above them. Accordingly, when he awaked out of his sleep, he said, "Surely, the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."§

Again, after wrestling all night with the Angel, not knowing who it was, and asking after His name, then at length "Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face! and my life is preserved."||

So again, after the Angel had departed from Gideon, who had treated

* John xiii. 7.

† John xii. 16.

‡ Luke xxiv. 32.

§ Gen. xxviii. 11—17.

|| Gen. xxxii. 30.

Him like a man, then, and not till then, he discovered who had been with him, and he said, "Alas, O Lord God ; for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face."*

And so in like manner, after the Angel had departed from Manoah and his wife, then, and not till then, they discovered Him. Then "they fell on their faces to the ground. . . . And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God."†

Such is God's rule in Scripture, to dispense His blessings silently and secretly ; so that we do not discern them at the time, except by faith, afterwards only. Of which, as I have said, we have two special instances in the very outline of the Gospel history ; the mission of our Saviour, who was not understood till afterwards to be the Son of God Most High, and the mission of the Holy Ghost, which was still more laden with spiritual benefits, and is still more secret. Flesh and blood could not discern the Son of God, even when He wrought visible miracles ; the natural man still less discerns the things of the Spirit of God ; yet in the next world all shall be condemned, for not believing here what it was never given them to see. Thus the presence of God is like His glory as it appeared to Moses ; He said, "Thou canst see My face, . . . and live ;" but He passed by, and Moses saw that glory behind, which he might not see in front, or in passing ; he saw it as it retired, and he acknowledged it, and "made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."‡

Now consider how parallel this is to what takes place in the providences of daily life. Events happen to us pleasant or painful ; we do not know at the time the meaning of them, we do not see God's hand in them. If indeed we have faith, we confess what we do not see, and take all that happens as His ; but any how, whether we accept it in faith or not, at best we can but accept *in* faith. We see nothing. We see not why things come, or whither they tend. Jacob cried out on one occasion, "All these things are against me ;"§ certainly so they seemed to be. One son made away with by the rest, another in prison in a foreign land, a third demanded ;—"Me have ye bereaved of my children ; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away : all these things are against me." Yet all these things were working for good. Or pursue the fortunes of the favourite and holy youth who was the first taken from him ; sold by his brethren to strangers, carried into Egypt, tempted by a very perilous temptation, overcoming it but not rewarded, thrown into prison, the iron entering into his soul, waiting there till the Lord should be gracious, and "look down

* Judges vi. 22. † Ib. xiii. 20. 22. ‡ Exod. xxxiii. 20. xxxiv. 8. § Gen. xlii. 36.

from heaven ;” but waiting—why ? and how long ? It is said again and again in the sacred narrative, “The Lord was with Joseph ;” but do you think he saw at the time any tokens of God ? any tokens, except so far as by faith he realized them, in faith he saw them ? His faith was its own reward ; which to the eye of reason was no reward at all, for it did but judge of things by that standard which it had originally set up, and pronounce that Joseph was happy because he ought to be so. Thus though the Lord was with him, apparently all things were against him. Yet afterwards he saw, what was so mysterious at the time ;—“God did send me before you,” he said to his brethren, “to preserve life. . . . It was not you that sent me hitherto, but God ; and He hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”

Wonderful providence indeed which is so silent, yet so efficacious, so constant, so unerring ! This is what baffles the power of Satan. He cannot discern the Hand of God in what goes on ; and though he would fain meet it and encounter it, in his mad and blasphemous rebellion against heaven, he cannot find it. Crafty and penetrating as he is yet his thousand eyes and his many instruments avail him nothing against the majestic serene silence, the holy imperturbable calm which reigns through the providences of God. Crafty and experienced as he is, he appears like a child or a fool, like one made sport of, whose daily bread is but failure and mockery, before the deep and secret wisdom of the Divine Counsels. He makes a guess here, or does a bold act there, but all in the dark. He knew not of Gabriel’s coming, and the immaculate conception of the Virgin,* or what was meant by that Holy Thing which was to be born, being called the Son of God. He tried to kill Him, and he made martyrs of the innocent children ; he tempted the Lord of all with hunger and with ambitious prospects ; he sifted the Apostles, and got none but one who already bore his own name, and had been already given over as a devil. He rose against his God in his full strength, in the hour and power of darkness, and then he seemed to conquer ; but with his utmost effort, and as his greatest achievements, he did no more than “whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.”† He brought into the world the very salvation which he feared and hated. He accomplished the Atonement of that world, whose misery He was plotting. Wonderfully silent, yet resistless course of God’s providence ! “Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour ;” and if even devils, sagacious as they are, spirits by nature and experienced in

* Vid. Ignat. ad Eph. 19.

† Acts iv. 28.

evil, cannot detect His hand, as He works, how can we hope to see it except by that way which the devils will not take, by loving faith? how can we see it except afterwards as a reward to our faith, beholding the cloud of glory in the distance, which when present was too rare and impalpable for mortal sense?

And so, again, in a number of other occurrences, not striking, not grievous, not pleasant, but ordinary, we afterwards are able to discern that He has been with us, and, like Moses, to worship Him. Let a person, who trusts he is on the whole serving God acceptably, look back upon his past life, and he will find how critical were moments and acts, which at the time seemed the most indifferent: as, for instance, the school he was sent to as a child, the occasion of his falling in with those persons who have most benefited him, the accidents which determined his calling or prospects, whatever they were. God's hand is ever over his own, and He leads them forward by a way they know not of. The utmost they can do is to believe what they cannot see now, what they shall see hereafter; and as believing, to act together with God towards it.

And hence perchance it is, that years that are past bear in retrospect so much of fragrance with them, though at the time perhaps we saw little in them to take pleasure in; or rather we did not, could not realize that we *were* receiving pleasure, though we received it. We received pleasure, because we were in the presence of God, but we knew it not; we knew not what we received; we did not bring home to ourselves or reflect upon the pleasure we were receiving; but afterwards, when enjoyment is past, reflection comes in. We feel at the time; we recognise and reason afterwards. Such, I say, is the sweetness and softness with which days past away fall upon the memory, and strike us. The most ordinary years, when we seemed to be living for nothing, these shine forth to us in their very regularity and orderly course. What was sameness at the time, is now stability; what was dulness, is now a soothing calm; what seemed unprofitable, has now its treasure in itself; what was but monotony, is now harmony; all is pleasing and comfortable, and we regard it all with affection. Nay, even sorrowful times (which at first sight is wonderful) are thus softened and illuminated afterwards: yet why should they not be so, since then, more than at other times, our Lord is present, when He seems leaving His own to desolateness and orphanhood? The planting of Christ's Cross in the heart, is sharp and trying; but the stately tree rears itself aloft, and has fair branches and rich fruit, and is good to look upon. And if all this be true of sad or of ordinary times, much more so is it fulfilled to the true Christian as regards seasons of religious obedience and comfort.

Such are the feelings with which men often look back on their childhood, when any accident brings it vividly before them. Some relic or token of that early time, some spot, or some book, or a word, or a scent, or a sound, brings them back in memory to the first years of their discipleship, and they then see, what they could not know at the time, that God's presence went up with them and gave them rest. Nay, even now perhaps they discern not fully what it was which made that time so bright and glorious. They are full of tender, affectionate thoughts towards those first years, but they do not know why. They think it is those very years which they yearn after, whereas it is the presence of God which they now see was then over them, which attracts them. They think that they regret the past, when they are but longing after the future. It is not that they would be children again, but that they would be Angels and would see God; they would be immortal beings, crowned with amaranth, robed in white, and with palms in their hands, before His throne.

What happens in the fortunes of individuals, happens also to the Church. Its pleasant times are pleasant in memory. We cannot know who are great and who are little, what times are serious and what are their effects, till afterwards. Then we make much of the abode, and the goings out and the comings in of those who in their day lived familiarly with us, and seemed like other men. Then we gather up the recollection of what they did here, and what they said there. Then their persecutors, however powerful, are not known or spoken of, except by way of setting off *their* achievements and triumph in the Gospel. "Kings of the earth, and the great men, and rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men," who in their day so magnified themselves, so ravaged and deformed the Church, that it could not be seen except by faith, then are found in nowise to have infringed the continuity of its outlines, which shine out clear and glorious, or more delicate and tender for the very attempt to obliterate them. It needs very little study of history to prove how really this is the case; how little schism and divisions and disorders and troubles and fears and persecutions and scatterings and threatenings interfere with the presence and the glory of Christ Mystical, as looked upon afterwards, though at the time they almost hid it. Great Saints, great events, great privileges, like the everlasting mountains, grow as we recede from them.

And it is a sort of instinct, felt by the multitude, that they are really in possession of that which they neither see nor in faith accept, which (as some have remarked) makes them so unwilling just at the last moment to give up those privileges which they have so long possessed without valuing or using. Sometimes at the last moment, when mer-

cies are being withdrawn, when it is too late, or all but too late, a feeling comes over them that something precious is going from them. They seem to hear the sound of arms, and the voices in the Temple saying, "Let us depart hence;" and they attempt to retain what they cannot see:—penitents, when the day of grace is over.

Once more: every one of us surely must have experienced this general feeling most strongly, at one time or other, as regards the Sacraments and Ordinances of the Church. At the time, we cannot realize, we can but believe that God is with us; but after an interval, a sweetness breathes from them, as from His garments, "of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." Such is the memory of many a Holy Communion in Church, of Holy Communions solemnized at a sick bed, of Baptisms assisted in, of Confirmation, of Marriage, of Ordination; nay, Services which at the time we could not enjoy, from sickness, from agitation, from restlessness,—Services which at the time, in spite of our belief in their blessedness, yet troubled our wayward hearts,—Services which we were tempted to think long, feared beforehand, nay, and wished over when they were performing, (alas! that we should be so blind and dead to our highest good,) yet afterwards are full of God. We come, like Jacob, in the dark, and lie down with a stone for our pillow; but when we rise again, and call to mind what has passed, we recollect we have seen a vision of Angels, and the Lord manifested through them, and we are led to cry out, "How dreadful is this place! this is *none other* than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

To conclude. Let us profit by what every day and hour teaches us, as it flies. What is dark before it meets us, reflects the Sun of Righteousness when it is past. Let us profit by this in future, so far as this, to have *faith in what* we cannot see. The world seems to go on as usual. There is nothing of heaven in the face of society; in the news of the day there is nothing of heaven; in the faces of the many, or of the great, or of the rich, or of the busy, there is nothing of heaven; in the words of the eloquent, or the deeds of the powerful, or the counsels of the wise, or the resolves of the lordly, or the pomps of the wealthy, there is nothing of heaven. And yet the Ever-blessed Spirit of God is here; the Presence of the Eternal Son, ten times more glorious, more powerful than when He trod the earth in our flesh, is with us. Let us ever bear in mind this divine truth,—the more secret God's hand is, the more powerful, the more silent, the more awful. We are under the awful ministration of the Spirit, against whom whoso speaks, hazards more than can be reckoned up; whom whoso grieves, loses more of blessing and glory than can be fathomed. The Lord was with Joseph, and the Lord was with David, and the Lord, in the days

of His flesh, was with His Apostles ; but now He is with us in Spirit. And inasmuch as the Divine Spirit is more than flesh and blood ; inasmuch as the risen and glorified Saviour is more powerful than when He was in the form of a servant ; inasmuch as the Eternal Word, spiritualizing His own manhood, has more of virtue, and grace, and blessing, and life, than when concealed in it, and subject to temptation and pain ; inasmuch as faith is more blessed than sight, by so much more are we now more highly privileged, more of kings and priests unto God and His Father, even than the disciples who saw and touched Him. He who glorified Christ, imparts Him thus glorified to us. If He could work miracles in the days of His flesh, how much more can He work miracles now ? and if His visible miracles were full of power, much more so are His miracles invisible. Let us beg of Him grace wherewith to enter into the depth of our privileges,—to enjoy what we possess,—to believe, to ask for, to use, to improve, to glory in our present gifts as “members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.”

SERMON XVIII.

THE GAINSAYING OF KORAH.

JUDE 11.

Wo unto them ; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

THERE are two special sins which trouble the Church, and are denounced in Scripture, ambition and avarice, the sin of Korah and the sin of Balaam ; both of which are spoken of in the text. The sin of Balaam is denounced again and again by St. Paul, in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus ; as where he says, “A Bishop must be . . . not greedy of filthy lucre . . . not covetous ;” “the Deacons must be . . . not greedy of filthy lucre ;” noticing the while that some supposed that “gain was godliness,” and “taught things which they ought not

for filthy lucre's sake.'* And the sin of Korah, or ambition, is condemned by our Lord, when He commands, "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;" by St. James, when he says, "Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation;" and by St. Paul, when he directs that a Bishop should not be a "novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."† And both sins together are spoken of by St. Peter, in his exhortation to the Elders to "feed the flock of God not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."‡

Accordingly, these are the two sins brought before us by our Church in the first lessons of the first Sunday after Easter, which is, as it were, the festival in commemoration of the Ministerial Commission. After celebrating the resurrection of Christ, when He became "a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," we proceed to make mention of the means which He has instituted for exercising His Priesthood on earth continually,—for commemorating and applying in the Spirit, among His elect people, again and again, day after day, to the end of the world, that atoning death and glorious resurrection, which He wrought out once for all in His own Person on Calvary. He Himself instituted that means on the very day that He rose from the dead, ordaining man, frail and fallible as he is, to be the vessel of His gifts, and to represent Him. When He was risen, He did not first show Himself to His enemies, nor manifest the Spirit, nor unfold His new law, nor destroy the Temple; but He consecrated His Ministers: "As My Father hath sent Me," He said to His Apostles, "even so send I you." And, as if after His pattern, we too, even at this day, follow up the celebration of His "taking to Himself His great power," with that of His delegating it to His Church, as the Gospel selected for the same Sunday shows.

Of such high importance then, in our Church's judgment, is the subject of the Christian Ministry; so intimately connected with the Divine scheme of mercy, so full of reverence and awe. This will be best seen by proceeding, as I shall now do, to consider the lesson derived from the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, which, though properly belonging to the Old Covenant, our Church certainly considers applicable to us Christians.

The history in question contains an account, not only of the ambition of Korah himself, who was a Levite or minister, but of the rebellion

* Tim. iii. 8. vi. 5. Tit. i. 7. 11.

† Matt. xx. 26. James iii. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 6.

‡ 1st Pet. v. 2, 3.

of Dathan and Abiram, who were not ministers, but, as we now speak, laymen.

In considering it, I shall confine myself to this point, viz. to determine the feelings and circumstances under which these wicked men rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and that, with a view of warning those who speak lightly of schism, separation, and dissent, in this day ; for I think it will be seen that they are feelings and circumstances which prevail very widely now as well as then, and, if they do prevail, are as evil now as they were then ; St. Jude, in the text, plainly intimating that such gainsaying as Korah's is a sin in a Christian, as well as formerly in the Jews, and that those who commit it are in the way to perish. This, then, is a very serious thought ; considering, as I have said, how men in these days make light of it.

The outline of the history of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram is this : they rebelled against Moses and Aaron, and in consequence Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up by an earthquake, and Korah's company was burned with fire. Now, then, let us proceed to the remarks proposed.

1. First, then, let the number and dignity of the offenders be observed. They seem to have been some of the most eminent and considerable persons in Israel. Dathan and Abiram's party are said more than once, with some emphasis, to have been " famous in the congregation, men of renown."* Moreover there were among them as many as two hundred and fifty *princes*, or, as we should now say, noblemen. A very great and formidable opposition to Moses and Aaron was it, when so great a number of eminent persons rebelled against, or (in modern language) became dissenters from the Church. Nor was this all,—a portion of God's appointed ministers joined them. The Levites, as we all know, were the especially holy tribe : a portion of them, viz. the family of Aaron, were priests ; but all of them were ministers. Such was Korah ; but, dissatisfied with being merely what God had made him, he aspired to be something more, to have the priesthood. And it appears that just as many of his brethren joined him in his rebellion as there were princes who joined Dathan and Abiram. Two hundred and fifty Levites, or ministers, were banded together in this opposition to Moses, forming, from their rank and number, a body (to use once more modern language) of very high respectability, to say the least, that is, respectability in the eyes of men.

2. Next, let us observe how confident they were that they were right. They seemed to have entertained no kind of doubt or hesitation:

* Numb. xvi. 2. xxvi. 9.

When Moses denounced Dathan and Abiram, and bade all those who wished to escape their curse, to “depart” at once “from the tents of those wicked men,” “Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, their sons, and their little children.” You see they had no misgivings, no fears, no perplexity; they saw their way clear; they were sure they were in the right; and they came out, to stand any test, any sentence of wrath which Moses might attempt, as thinking that nothing could come of it. Nor was Korah’s confidence less. Moses challenged him and the rest to appear before God, to perform the priest’s office, and so to stand the test whether or not He would accept them; and they promptly accepted the proposal. They were to “take their censers, and put fire therein, and put incense in them before the Lord,” “and it shall be, that the man whom the Lord doth choose, he shall be holy.” Korah and his company accordingly “stood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moses and Aaron;” nay, in that sacred and awful place, where was the glory of the Lord visibly displayed, did Korah endure to “gather all *the congregation*” against Moses and Aaron. Sceptics, were there such standing by, might have made the remark, that both parties were equally sincere, equally confident; and therefore neither was more pleasing to God than the other.

Such was the confidence of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, of the two hundred and fifty princes or nobles, and the two hundred and fifty ministers of God. And we, who believe that in spite of their confidence Almighty God was against them, are perhaps at first sight tempted to attribute it to some extraordinary infatuation, judicial blindness, special hard-heartedness, or the like,—something quite out of the way, peculiar perhaps to the Jews,—something which cannot happen now. We cannot comprehend how their confidence could possibly be based on *reason* (I do not say on correct reason,) but on even *apparent* reason. We do not consider that perchance they *thought* they had good reasons for what they did, as we often think in our own case, when we have not. Rather we attribute it to something irrational, to pride, obstinacy, or hatred of the truth, as indeed it was ultimately; but I mean, to some such evil principle operating on the soul *at once* and not operating on it *through* the pretence of reason, not so operating as to be hidden whether from themselves or others. And thus we lose the lesson which this solemn history is calculated to convey to us at this day; because, since the opposition made to God’s Church in these days is professedly based upon reason, not upon mere prejudice, passion, or wilfulness, persons think that the confidence with which they oppose themselves to it, is a very different sort of confidence from that of

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, whereas it is really very much the same.

3. What, then, were the *reasons* or *arguments* which made Korah, Dathan, and Abiram so confident they were in the right,—so confident, that they even ventured to appeal to God, and to rise up against Moses and Aaron as if in the Name of the Lord? Their ground was this: they accused Moses and Aaron of what is now called *priestcraft*. Let us pay attention to this circumstance.

Now, let it be observed, that there were many rebellions of the people, founded on open and professed *unbelief*. This was not the character of the particular sin under review; it was not a disbelief in God, but in Moses. Distrust in Moses, indeed, was mixed up in all their rebellions; but generally their rebellion was more strictly directed against Almighty God. Thus, when the spies returned, and spread about an evil report of the good land, and the people believed them, this implied a disbelief in the Divine Arm altogether, as manifested in their deliverance and protection. Thus they complained of the manna; and thus they went out on the seventh day to gather it. But it is remarkable, that in the rebellion before us, there is no hint of the promoters of it disbelieving in the power or providence of God over the chosen people; only they accuse Moses of altering or (as we should say) corrupting the divine system. Dathan and Abiram were sons of Reuben, the first-born of the tribes; they might consider that Moses was interfering with their prerogative by birth to lead and govern the people. But any how, they seem to have relied on their rank and eminence; they and their companions were “famous in the congregation, men of renown,” and they could not bring themselves to submit to God’s appointment, by which the nation was formed into a Church, and Levi was chosen, at God’s inscrutable will, to be the priest instead of Reuben. Accordingly, far from denying that God was with the nation, they maintained it; they only said that He was not specially with Moses and Aaron; they only claimed an equality of honour and power with Moses and Aaron; they only denounced Moses and Aaron as usurpers, tyrants, and hypocrites. Far from showing any scoffing or lightness of mind, or profaneness, like Esau’s, who rejected the blessing, they so esteemed it as to claim it as their own, in all its fulness; nay, they claimed it for the whole people. They were only opposed to what is now called *exclusiveness*; they were champions of the rights of the people against what they called the encroachments, [the arrogant pretensions, the priestcraft of Moses their Lawgiver, and Aaron the Saint of the Lord. They said, “Ye take too much upon you, seeing *all* the congregation are holy, *every one of them*; and the Lord is among them;

wherefore then lift ye up yourselves *above* the congregation of the Lord?" Their objection was, that Moses was interposing himself as a mediator between God and them,—limiting the mercies of God, restraining the freedom, obscuring the glory of His grace, and robbing them of their covenanted privileges; that he had instituted an order of priests, whereas they were *all* priests, every one, and needed no human assistance, no voice, or advice, or direction, or performance, from fallible man, from men of like passions and imperfections with themselves, to approach God withal, and serve Him acceptably. "*All* the congregation are holy," say they, "every one of them; and the Lord is among them." "The Lord is not far off; He is not in the clouds only, He is not on Sinai, He is not on the mercy-seat, He is not with Aaron; but He is among us, in the congregation, as near one man as another, as near all of us as He is to Moses." Their partisans affect the same tone even after God's judgment has fallen on the rebels. 'The people say to Moses and Aaron, "Ye have killed the people of the Lord" Yes; they call those separatists and schismatics "the Lord's people," and they accuse Moses and Aaron forsooth of having by some device of juggling priests, some strange and diabolical stratagem, some secret of magic or science, or of poisoning, compassed the death of their enemies, whom they represented to have died by a miraculous judgment; and they seem as if to pride themselves on their discernment, or the clearness of intellectual vision by which they saw through the fraud, and brought it home to the impostors.

Awful guilt indeed in these self-wise men, if this representation be true! yet it is apparently true, as the words show with which the rebels themselves answer the summons of Moses to come to him. "Wilt thou," say they, "put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up."* No; "we have eyes; we are not mere dull, brutish, superstitious bigots, to crouch before a priest, and submit to his yoke of bondage; we can reason, we can argue, we are determined to exercise our free unfettered private judgment, and to determine (candidly indeed and dispassionately,) but still to determine for ourselves before we act. We will indeed give a fair hearing to what is told us; we will listen with a becoming deference and with all patience, nay, with a sort of consideration and prepossession to what you, O Moses and Aaron, say to us; but still we will not have our eyes put out. No, seeing is believing; we will not go by instinctive feeling, by conscience, by mere probabilities; but every thing shall be examined in a rational and enlightened way, every thing searched, and sifted, and scrutinized, and rigidly tested, before it is admitted. The burden of proof lies with you;

* Vide *Lyra Apostolica*, Poem 151. ed. 2.

till you have proved to us your claims, we will not go up, we will not obey. To tell the truth, we are suspicious of you. We are 'jealous with a godly jealousy,' (alas! for men do so speak!) of any encroachments on our spiritual liberty, any assumption of superior holiness, superior acceptableness in one of us over another. We are all brethren, we are all equal, all independent. 'Wilt thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?' Moreover," they continue, "thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards;" or, as men now speak, "The present system does not work well; there are many abuses, abundant need of reform, much still undone which should be done, much idleness, much inefficiency, many defects in the Church. We see it quite plainly. Do not seek to defend yourselves. Wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up."

Something of the same kind of spirit had already shown itself in the sin of the golden calf, though that sin was open idolatry. Then also the people thought that they had found a better religion than Moses had taught them. They were far from denying God's miraculous providences; but they said that Moses had taken to himself what belonged to the nation; he had taught them in his own way, and they had a right to choose for themselves. "Up," they said, "make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."* And where was Moses? He was with God in prayer and vision. They did not know, or at least understand this. So they said, "What a time for a ruler to be absent! in what a crisis! how much is there that wants doing!—forty days are gone, and he is still away. Is he lost? has he left us here to ourselves? is he feigning any communication from heaven? any how, what binds us to *him*? We are bound indeed to the God who brought us out of Egypt, but not to this rule of Moses or the line of Aaron." Moses was away; and where was Aaron?—where? the people could not ask, for they were partakers in his sin, rather, they had forced him into their sin, the sin of the golden calf. Aaron was receiving their gold ornaments, and was moulding them into an idol. Alas! the people could not accuse, who had seduced him into the sin. But there *were* those who might, who did complain; and who they were, since I have been led to the subject, it will be found to our present purpose to inquire.

They were the Levites. While Aaron sinned, they the inferior ministers stood silent, but wondering and distressed. These had no part in

* Exod. xxxii. 1.

the sin ; and when Moses came down from the mount and said, " Who is on the Lord's side ?" * then they, and they only, answered the call. " All the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him ;" and when he ordered them, they promptly " put every man his sword by his side, and went in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slew every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour ;" and " there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." This is considered in Scripture † the act of consecration by which the Levites became the sacred tribe ; so that their advancement to the ministerial office is historically coincident with Aaron's temporary defection from his more sacred duties in it. All this had happened as some suppose shortly before, as others think as much as twenty years before the occurrence which has been under our immediate review ; but whether or not the one transaction, as has been reasonably supposed, led to the other, whether or not Korah's stout-hearted rebellion was the result ‡ of ambitious views in the Levites, which their advancement to the sacred ministry had occasioned, still certain it is that at this time " it seemed but a small thing unto them " (in Moses' words) " that the God of Israel had separated them from the congregation of Israel, to bring them near to Himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the Lord, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them ;" and " they sought the priesthood also," Aaron's portion, on whom they were appointed to attend. || And the circumstance that Aaron had failed on that trying occasion when they were rewarded, might dispose them to condemn him at this time, not recollecting that God's will made the difference between man and man, and that He who gave them His covenanted blessings through bulls and calves, might also vouchsafe them, did it please Him, through frail and erring men ; and might dispense with inward perfection, and take up with mere earthen vessels, and be content with faith instead of consistent obedience, as He dispensed with eloquence, or wisdom, or strength. Such then were the circumstances under which the Levites rebelled, being elated by their existing privileges, as the Reubenites were stimulated by jealousy.

The parties then concerned in this formidable conspiracy were not besotted idolaters ; they were not infidels ; they were not obstinate, prejudiced, unreasoning zealots ; they were not the victims of unscrupulous and desperate ambition : but though ambitious, proud, headstrong, obstinate, unbelieving, they veiled all these bad principles even from their

* Exod. xxii. 26.

† Vide Patrick on Numb. xvi. 2.

‡ Exod. xxxii. 29.

|| Numb. iii. 10.

own conscience under a show of reason, of clear, simple, straightforward, enlightened reason, under a plain argument open to the meanest capacity: "*All the congregation,*" they said, "*were holy, every one.*" God had signified no exception or exclusion; all had been baptized in the Red Sea, all had been at Sinai. Moses, however, thus they might speak, had added to this simple and primitive religion a system of his own, a system of priestcraft. The especial favours which God had shown Moses were done twenty years before, and could be denied without much chance of contradiction; or if the rebellion took place (as others say) shortly after the Exodus, then it came close upon Aaron's sin in the matter of the golden calf. Any how, an excuse was easily found for explaining away the authority of Moses and Aaron, for denying the priesthood, and accusing it of being a corruption; and for professing to be the champions of a pure, and enlightened, and uncorrupt worship,—a worship which would be quite clear of the idolatrous doings of Aaron, because in it Aaron's prerogatives would be destroyed altogether.

Such is the history of the Church in the wilderness, in which we see as in a type the history of the Gospel. And how did it end? I stated in the commencement. The earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the congregation of Abiram, their houses, their families, their possessions, and all that belonged to them. Fire went out from the Lord, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who offered incense.

A very few words will suffice to suggest the lesson to be derived from this awful history; it is this:—If the Old Testament is still our rule of duty, except in such details as imply a local religion and a material sanctuary; if it is our rule of duty in its principles, its doctrines, its precepts; if the Gospel is but the fulfilment and development of the Law; if the parts in both are the same, only the circumstances without and the spirit within new; if though Circumcision is abolished, yet there is Baptism instead of it; the Passover abolished, yet Holy Communion instead; the Sabbath abolished, yet instead of it the Lord's Day; if the two tables of stone which contained the Law are destroyed, yet our Lord's Sermon on the Mount and other discourses take their place; if though Moses is gone, Christ is come; and if in like manner, though Aaron is gone and his priestly line, another order of priests is come instead; (and unless this is so, the Old Testament is in a great measure but a dead letter to Christians; and if there be but a chance that it is so, and if it has always been taken to be so, it is a most serious matter to act as if it were not so;) how great must be the sin of

resisting the ministers of Christ, or of intruding into their office! How great the sin of presuming to administer the rites of the Church, to baptize, to celebrate the Holy Communion, or to ordain, or to bless, without a commission! Korah's sin was kept in remembrance for ever on the covering of the Altar, "to be a memorial," says the inspired writer, "that no stranger which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and his company," in other words, as the warning is to be interpreted now, "that no one, who is not descended from the Apostles by laying on of hands, come near to perform the ministerial office before the Lord, that he be not as Korah and his company." Many, you will say, intrude into it in this day in ignorance. True, it is so. Therefore, for them let us pray in our Lord's words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

S E R M O N X I X .

THE MYSTERIOUSNESS OF OUR PRESENT BEING.

PSALM CXXXIX. 14.

I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.

IN the very impressive Psalm from which these words are taken, this is worth noticing among other things,—that the inspired writer finds, in the mysteries without and within him, a source of admiration and praise. "I will *praise* Thee, *for* I am fearfully and wonderfully made; *marvellous* are Thy works." When Nicodemus heard of God's wonderful working, He said, "How can these things be?" But holy David glories in what the natural man stumbles at. It awes his heart and imagination, to think that God sees him, whatever he is, yet without provoking or irritating his reason. He has no proud thoughts rising against what he cannot understand, and calling for his vigilant control. He does not submit his reason by an effort, but he bursts forth in exultation, to think that God is so mysterious. "Such knowledge," he

says, "is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." Again "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!"

This reflection is suitable on the Festival* which we are at present engaged in celebrating, on which our thoughts are especially turned to the great doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. It is my intention now to make some remarks upon it; not however explanatory of the doctrine itself, which we have to-day confessed in the Athanasian Creed as fully and explicitly as it can be set forth in human words; but I will endeavour from the text to show, that the difficulty which human words have in expressing it, is no greater than we meet with when we would express in human words even those earthly things of which we actually have experience, and which we cannot deny to exist, because we see them: so that our part evidently lies in using the mysteries of religion, as David did, simply as a means of impressing on our minds the inscrutableness of Almighty God. Mysteries in religion are measured by the proud according to their own capacity, by the humble, according to the power of God; the humble glorify God for them, the proud exalt themselves against them.

The text speaks of earthly things,—“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” Now, let us observe some of the mysteries which are involved in our own nature.

1. First, we are made up of soul and body. Now, if we did not know this, so that we cannot deny it, what notion could our minds ever form of such a mixture of natures, and how should we ever succeed in making those who go only by abstract reason take in what we meant? The body is made of matter; this we see; it has a certain extension, make, form, and solidity: by the soul, we mean that invisible principle which thinks. We are conscious we are alive, and are rational; each man has his own thoughts, feelings, and desires; each man is one to himself, and he knows himself to be one and indivisible,—one in such sense, that, while he exists, it were an absurdity to suppose he can be any other than himself; one in a sense in which no material body which consists of parts can be one. He is sure that he is distinct from the body, though joined to it, because he is one, and the body is not one, but a collection of many things. He feels moreover that he is distinct from it, because he uses it; for what a man can use he is superior to. No one can by any possibility mistake his body for himself. It is *his*; it is not he. This principle, then, which thinks and acts in the body, and which each person feels to be himself, we call the soul. We do not know what it is; it cannot be reached by any of the senses; we

* Trinity Sunday.

cannot see it or touch it. It has nothing in common with extension or form ; to ask what shape the soul is, would be as absurd as to ask what is the shape of a thought, or a wish, or a regret, or a hope. And hence we call the soul spiritual and immaterial, and say that it has no parts, and is of no size at all. All this seems undeniable. Yet observe, if all this be true, what is meant by saying that it is *in* the body, any more than saying that a thought or a hope is in a stone or a tree ? *How* is it joined to the body ? what keeps it one with the body ? what keeps it in the body ? what prevents it any moment from separating from the body ? when two things which we see are united, they are united by some connection which we can understand. A chain or cable keeps a ship in its place ; we lay the foundation of a building in the earth, and the building endures. But what is it which unites soul and body ? how do they touch ? how do they keep together ? how is it we do not wander to the stars the depths of the sea, or to and fro as chance may carry us, while our body remains where it was on the earth ? So far from its being wonderful that the body one day dies, how is it that it is made to live and move at all ? how is it that it keeps from dying a single hour ? Certainly it is as incomprehensible as any thing can be, how soul and body can make up one man ; and, unless we had the instance before our eyes, we should in saying so seem to be using words without meaning. For instance : would it not be extravagant and idle to speak of time as deep or high, or of space as quick or slow ? Not less idle, surely, it perchance seems to some races of spirits to say that thought and mind have a body, which in the case of man they have, according to God's marvellous will. It is certain, then, that experience outstrips reason in its capacity of knowledge ; why then should reason circumscribe faith, when it cannot compass sight ?

2. Again : the soul is not only one, and without parts, but moreover, as if by a great contradiction even in terms, it is in every part of the body. It is no where, yet every where. It may be said, indeed, that it is especially in the brain ; but, granting this for argument's sake, yet it is quite certain, since every part of his body belongs to 'him, that a man's self is in every part of his body. No part of a man's body is like a mere instrument, as a knife, or a crutch might be, which he takes up and may lay down. Every part of it is part of himself ; it is connected into one by his soul, which is one. Supposing we take stones and raise a house, the building is not *really* one ; it is composed of a number of separate parts, which viewed as collected together, we call one, but which are not one except in our notion of them. But the hands and feet, the head and trunk, form one body under the presence of the soul within them. Unless the soul were in every part, they

would not form one body ; so that the soul is in every part, uniting it with every other, though it consists of no parts at all. I do not of course mean that there is any real contradiction in these opposite truths ; indeed, we know there is not, and cannot be, because they *are* true, because human nature is a fact before us. But it is a contradiction *when put into words* ; we cannot so express it as not to involve an apparent contradiction ; and then, if we discriminate our terms, and make distinctions, and balance phrases, and so on, we shall seem to be technical and artificial and speculative, and to use words without meaning. Now, this is precisely our case, as regards the doctrine of the Ever-blessed Trinity. We have never been in heaven ; God, as He is in Himself, is hid from us. We are informed concerning Him by those who were inspired by Him for the purpose, nay by His Co-eternal Son Himself, who “knoweth the Father,” when He came on earth. And in the message they delivered to us from above are declarations concerning His nature, which seem to run counter the one to the other. He is revealed to us as One God, the Father, One indivisible Spirit ; yet there is said to exist in Him from everlasting His Only-begotten Son, the same as He is, and yet distinct, and from and in Them both, from everlasting and indivisibly, exists the Co-equal Spirit. All this put into words, seems a contradiction in terms ; men have urged it as such ; then Christians, lest they should seem unduly and harshly to press upon the world words clashing with each other, and so dishonour the truth of God, and cause hearers to stumble, have limited their words, and classified them ; and then for doing this they have been accused of speculating and theorizing. The same result, doubtless, would take place in the parallel case already mentioned. Had we no bodies, and were a revelation made us that there was a race who had bodies as well as souls, what a number of powerful objections should we seem to possess against that revelation ! We might plausibly say, that the words used in conveying it were arbitrary and unmeaning. What (we should ask) was the meaning of saying that the soul had no parts, yet was in every part of the body ? what was meant by saying it was every where and no where ? how could it be one, and yet repeated, as it were, ten thousand times over every atom and pore of the body, which it was said to exist in ? how could it be confined to the body at all ? how did it act upon the body ? how happened it, as was pretended, that, when the soul did but will, the arm moved, or the feet walked ? how can a spirit, which cannot touch any thing, yet avail to move so large a mass of matter, and so easily, as the human body ? These are some of the questions which might be asked, partly on the ground that the alleged fact was impossible, partly that the idea was self-contradictory. And these

are just the kind of questions with which arrogant and profane minds do assail the revealed doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

3. Further consider what a strange state we are in when we dream, and how difficult it would be to convey to a person who had never dreamed what was meant by dreaming. *His* vocabulary would contain no words to express any middle idea between perfect possession and entire suspension of the mind's powers. He would acknowledge what it was to be awake, what it was to be insensible ; but a state between the two he would neither have words to describe, nor, if he were self-confident and arrogant, inclination to believe, however well it was attested by those who ought to know. I do not say there is no conceivable accumulation of evidence that would subdue such a man's reason, since we see sometimes men's reason subdued by the evidences of the Gospel, whose hearts are imperfectly affected ; but I mean, that this earthly mystery *might* be brought before a man with about that degree of evidence in its favour which the Gospel actually has, not ordinarily overpowering, but constituting a *trial* of his heart, a trial, that is, whether the mysteries contained in it do or do not rouse his pride. Dreaming is not a fiction, but a real state of the mind, though only one or two in the whole world ever dreamed ; and if these one or two, or a dozen men, spoke to the rest of the world, and unanimously witnessed to the existence of that mysterious state, many doubtless would resist their report, as they do the mysteries of the Gospel, on the ground of its being unintelligible ; yet in that case they would be resisting the truth, and would be wrong, (not indeed blameably so, compared with those who on a like account reject the Gospel, which comes to us as a practical, not a mere abstract matter,) yet they would undeniably be considering a thing false which was true. It is no great harm, however, to be wrong in a mere matter of opinion ; but in matters which influence conduct, which bear upon our eternal interests, such as revealed religion, surely it is most hazardous, most unwise, though it is so common, to stumble at its mysteries, instead of believing and acting upon its threats and promises. Instead of embracing what they can understand, together with what they cannot, men criticise the wording in which truths are conveyed, which came from heaven. The inspired Apostles taught them to the first Christian converts, and they, according to the capacities of human language, whether their own or the Apostles', partly one and partly the other, preserved them ; and we, instead of thanking them for the benefit, instead of rejoicing that they should have handed on to us those secrets concerning God, instead of thanking Him for His condescension in allowing us to hear them, have hearts cold enough to complain of their mysteriousness.

Profane minds ask, "Is God one, or three?" They are answered, He is One, and He is also Three. They reply, "He cannot be one in the same sense in which He is Three." It is in reply allowed to them, "He is Three in one sense, One in another." They ask, "In what sense? what is that sense in which He is Three Persons,—what is that sense of the word Person such, that it neither stands for one separate Being, as it does with men, and yet, on the other hand, has a real and sufficient sense answering to the word?" We reply, that we do *not know* that middle sense; we cannot reconcile, we confess, the distinct portions of the doctrine; we can but take what is given us, and be content. They rejoin, that, if this be so, we are using words without meaning. We answer, No, not without meaning in themselves, but without meaning which *we* fully apprehend. God understands His own words, though human. God, when He gave the doctrine, put it into words, and the doctrine, as we word it, is the doctrine as the Apostles worded it; it is conveyed to us with the same degree of meaning in it, intelligible to us, with which the Apostles received it; so that there is no reason for giving it up because in part it is not intelligible. This we say; and they insist in reply, as if it were a sufficient answer, that the doctrine, as a whole, *is* unintelligible to us (which we grant); that the words we use have very little meaning (which is not true, though *we* may not see the meaning); and so they think to excuse their rejection of them.

But surely all this, I say, is much the same as what might take place in any discussion about dreaming, in a company where one or two persons had experienced it, and the multitude not. It might be said to those who told us of it, Do you mean that it is a state of waking or insensibility? is it one or the other? what is that sense in which we are not insensible in dreaming, and yet are not awake and ourselves? Now if we have mysteries even about ourselves, which we cannot even put into words accurately, much more may we suppose, even were we not told it, that there are mysteries in the nature of Almighty God; and so far from its being improbable that there should be mysteries, the declaration that there are even adds some probability to the revelation which declares them. On the other hand, still more unreasonable is disbelief, if grounded on this circumstance, because if we cannot put into consistent human language human things, if the state of dreaming, which we experience commonly, be described in unintelligible words and by contradictions, much less is there to surprise us in human words being insufficient to describe heavenly things.

These are a few out of many remarks which might be made concerning our own mysterious state, that is, concerning things in us

which we know to *be* really and truly, yet which we cannot accurately reflect upon and contemplate, cannot describe, cannot put into words, and cannot convey to another's comprehension who does not experience them. But this is a very large subject. Let a man consider how hardly he is able and how circuitously he is forced to describe the commonest objects of nature, when he attempts to substitute reason for sight, how difficult it is to define things, how impracticable it is to convey to another any complicated, or any deep or refined feeling, how inconsistent and self-contradictory his feelings seem, when put into words, how he subjects himself in consequence to misunderstanding, or ridicule, or triumphant criticism ; and he will not wonder at the impossibility of duly delineating in earthly words the first Cause of all thought, the Father of spirits, the One Eternal Mind, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see, the incomprehensible infinite God.

To conclude. One objection only, as it seems to me can be made to these reflections, and that is soon answered. It may be said that, though there be, as there well may be, ten thousand mysteries about the Divine Nature, yet why should they be disclosed in the Gospel ? as if the very circumstance that they *cannot* be put into words were a reason why it should not be attempted. But this surely is a very bold and presumptuous way of speaking, not to say more about it ; as if we had any means of knowing, as if we had any right to ask, why God does what He does in the very way He does it ; as if sinners, receiving a great and unmerited favour, were not very unthankful and acting almost madly, in saying, Why was it given us in this way, not in that ? Is God obliged to take us into counsel, and explain to us the reason for every thing He does ; or is it our plain duty to take what is given us, and feed upon it in faith ? And to those who do thus receive the blessed doctrine under consideration, it will be found to produce special and singular practical effects on them, on the very ground of its mysteriousness. There is nothing, according as we are given to see and judge of things, which will make a greater difference in the temper, character, and habits of an individual, than the circumstance of his holding or not holding the Gospel to be mysterious. Even then, if we go by its influence on our minds, we might safely pronounce that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and of other like mysteries, cannot be unimportant. If it be true, (as we hold it to be,) it must be of consequence ; for it tends to draw the mind in one particular direction, and to form it on a different mould from theirs, who do not believe in it. And thus what we actually are given to see, does go a certain way in

confirming to us what Scripture and the Church declare to us, that belief in this doctrine is actually necessary to salvation, by showing us that such belief has a moral effect on us. The temper of true faith is described in the text,—“Marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” A religious mind is ever marvelling, and irreligious men laugh and scoff at it because it does. A religious mind is ever looking out of itself, is ever pondering God’s words, is ever “looking into” them with the Angels, is ever realizing to itself Him on whom it depends, and who is the centre of all truth and good. Carnal and proud minds are contented with self; they like to remain at home; when they hear of mysteries, they have no devout curiosity to go and see the great sight, though it be ever so little out of their way; and when it actually falls in their path, they stumble at it. As great then as is the difference between hanging upon the thought of God and resting in ourselves, drawing up the soul to God and bringing all things in heaven and earth down to ourselves, exalting God and exalting reason, measuring things by God’s power and measuring them by our own ignorance, so great is the difference between him who believes in the Christian mysteries and him who does not. And were there no other reason for the revelation of them, but this gracious one, of raising us, refining us, making us reverent, making us expectant and devout, surely this would be more than a sufficient one.

Let us then all, learned and unlearned, gain this great benefit from the mystery of the Ever-Blessed Trinity. It is calculated to humble the wise in this world with the thought of what is above them, and to encourage and raise the lowly towards the thought of Almighty God, and the glories and marvels which shall one day be revealed to them. In the presence of God, should we through His grace be found worthy of attaining it, we shall know clearly what we now dutifully repeat and desire to know, how the Father Almighty is truly and by Himself God, the Eternal Son truly and by Himself God, and the Holy Ghost truly and by Himself God, and yet not three Gods but one God.

SERMON XX.*

THE VENTURES OF FAITH.

MATTHEW XX. 22.

They say unto Him, We are able.

THESE words of the holy Apostles, James and John, were in reply to a very solemn question addressed to them by their Divine Master. They coveted with a noble ambition, though as yet unpractised in the highest wisdom, untaught in the holiest truth,—they coveted to sit beside Him on His Throne of Glory. They would be content with nothing short of that special gift which He had come to grant to His elect, which He shortly after died to purchase for them, and which He offers to us. They asked the gift of eternal life; and He in answer told them, not that they should have it, (though for them it was really reserved,) but He reminded them what they *must venture for it*; “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able.” Here then a great lesson is impressed upon us, that our duty as Christians lies in this, in making ventures for eternal life without the absolute certainty of success.

Success and a reward everlasting they will have, who persevere unto the end. Doubt we cannot, that the ventures of all Christ’s servants must be returned to them at the Last Day with abundant increase. This is a true saying,—He returns far more than we lend to Him, and without fail. But I am speaking of individuals, of ourselves one by one. No one among us knows for certain that he himself will persevere; yet every one among us, to give himself even a chance of success at all, must make a venture. As regards individuals, then, it is quite true, that all of us must for certain make ventures for heaven, yet without the certainty of success through them. This, indeed, is the very meaning of the word “venture;” for that is a strange venture which has

* This Sermon was published by a friend between two and three years since.

nothing in it of fear, risk, danger, anxiety, uncertainty. Yes; so it certainly is; and in this consists the excellence and nobleness of *faith*; this is the very reason why *faith* is singled out from other graces, and honoured as the especial means of our justification, that its presence implies that we have the heart to make a venture.

St. Paul sufficiently sets this before us in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, which opens with a definition of faith; and after that, gives us examples of it, as if to guard against any possibility of mistake. After quoting the text, "the just shall live by faith," and thereby showing clearly that he is speaking of what he treats in his Epistle to the Romans as *justifying* faith, he continues, "Now faith is the substance," that is, the realizing, "of things hoped for, the evidence," that is, the ground of proof, "of things not seen." It is in its very essence the making present what is unseen; the acting upon the mere prospect of it, as if it really were possessed; the venturing upon it, the staking present ease, happiness, or other good, upon the chance of the future. And hence in another epistle he says pointedly, "If in this life only we have hope of Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* If the dead are not raised, we have indeed made a most signal miscalculation in the choice of life, and are altogether at fault. And what is true of the main doctrine itself, is true also of our individual interest in it. This he shows us in his epistle to the Hebrews, by the instance of the Ancient Saints, who thus risked their present happiness for future. Abraham "went out, not knowing whither he went." He and the rest died "not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Such was the faith of the Patriarchs: and in the text the youthful Apostles, with an untaught but generous simplicity, lay claim to the same. Little as they knew what they said in its fulness, yet their words were any how expressive of their hidden hearts, prophetic of their future conduct. They say unto Him, "We are able." They pledged themselves as if unawares, and are caught by One mightier than they, and, as it were, craftily made captive. But, in truth, their unsuspecting pledge was, after all, heartily made though they knew not what they promised; and so was accepted. "Are ye able to drink of My cup, and be baptized with My baptism? They say unto Him, We are able." He in answer, without promising them heaven, graciously said, "Ye *shall* drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with."

* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

Our Lord appears to act after the same manner towards St. Peter: He accepted his offer of service, yet warned him how little he himself understood it. The zealous Apostle wished to follow his Lord at once; but He said, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards."* At another time, he claimed the promise already made to Him; He said, "Follow thou Me;" and at the same time explained it, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."†

Such were the ventures made in faith and in uncertainty by Apostles. Our Saviour, in a passage of St. Luke's Gospel, binds upon us all the necessity of deliberately doing the like,—“Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it, begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and is not able to finish.” And then He presently adds, “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple,”‡ preparing us for the utmost. We give up our all to Him; and He is to claim this or that, or grant us somewhat of it for a season, according to His good pleasure. On the other hand, the case of the rich young man, who went away sorrowful, when our Lord bade him give up his all and follow him, is an instance of one who had *not* faith to make the venture of this world for the next, upon His word.

If then faith be the essence of a Christian life, and if it be what I have now described, it follows that our duty lies in risking upon Christ's word what we have, for what we have not; and doing so in a noble, generous way, not indeed rashly or lightly, still without knowing accurately what we do, not knowing either what we give up, nor again what we shall gain; uncertain about our reward, uncertain about our extent of sacrifice, in all respects leaning, waiting upon Him, trusting in Him to fulfil His promise, trusting in Him to enable us to fulfil our own vows, and so in all respects proceeding without carefulness or anxiety about the future.

Now I dare say that what I have said as yet seems plain and unexceptionable to most of those who hear me; yet surely, when I proceed to draw the practical inference which immediately follows, there are those who in their secret hearts, if not in open avowal, will draw back. Men allow us Ministers of Christ to proceed in our preaching, while

* John xiii. 36.

† John xxi. 18. 22.

‡ Luke xiv. 28—33.

we confine ourselves to general truths, until they see that they themselves are implicated in them, and have to act upon them; and then they suddenly come to a stand; they collect themselves and draw back, and say, "They do not see *this*—or do not admit *that*"—and though they are quite unable to say *why* that should not follow from what they already allow, which we show *must* follow, still they persist in saying, that they do not see that it does follow; and they look about for excuses, and they say we carry things too far, and that we are extravagant, and that we ought to limit and modify what we say, that we do not take into account times and seasons, and the like. This is what they pretend; and well has it been said, "where there is a will there is a way;" for there is no truth, however overpoweringly clear, but men may escape from it by shutting their eyes; there is no duty, however urgent, but they may find ten thousand good reasons against it, in their own case. And they are sure to say we carry things too far, when we carry them home to themselves.

This sad infirmity of men, called Christians, is exemplified in the subject immediately before us. Who does not at once admit that faith consists in venturing on Christ's word without seeing? Yet in spite of this, may it not be seriously questioned, whether men in general, even those of the better sort, venture any thing upon His truth at all?

Consider for an instant. Let every one who hears me ask himself the question, what stake has *he* in the truth of Christ's promise? How would he be a whit the worse off, supposing, (which is impossible,) but, supposing it to fail? We know what it is to have a stake in any venture of this world. We venture our property in plans which promise a return; in plans which we trust, which we have faith in. What have we ventured for Christ? What have we given to Him on a belief of His promise? The Apostle said, that he and his brethren would be of all men most miserable, if the dead were not raised. Can we in any degree apply this to ourselves? We think, perhaps, at present, we have some hope of heaven; well, *this* we should lose of course; but after all, how should we be worse off as to our *present* condition? A trader, who has embarked some property in a speculation which fails, not only loses his prospect of gain, but somewhat of his own which he ventured with the *hope* of the gain. This is the question, What have *we* ventured? I really fear, when we come to examine, it will be found that there is nothing we resolve, nothing we do, nothing we do not do, nothing we avoid, nothing we choose, nothing we give up, nothing we pursue, which we should not resolve, and do, and not do, and avoid, and choose, and give up, and pursue, if Christ had not died, and heaven were not promised us. I really fear that most men called

Christians, whatever they may profess, whatever they may think they feel, whatever warmth and illumination and love they may claim as their own, yet would go on almost as they do, neither much better nor much worse, if they believed Christianity to be a fable. When young, they indulge their lusts, or at least pursue the world's vanities ; as time goes on, they get into a fair way of business, or other mode of making money ; then they marry and settle ; and their interest coinciding with their duty, they seem to be, and think themselves, respectable and religious men ; they grow attached to things as they are ; they begin to have a zeal against vice and error ; and they follow after peace with all men. Such conduct, indeed, as far as it goes, is right and praiseworthy. Only I say, it has not necessarily any thing to do with religion at all ; there is nothing in it which is any proof of the presence of religious principle in those who adopt it ; there is nothing they would not do still, though they had nothing to gain from it, except what they gain now from it ; they do gain something now, they do gratify their present wishes, they are quiet and orderly, because it is their interest and taste to be so ; but they *venture* nothing, they risk, they sacrifice, they abandon nothing on the faith of Christ's word.

For instance : St. Barnabas had a property in Cyprus ; he gave it up for the poor of Christ. Here is an intelligible sacrifice. He did something he would not have done, unless the Gospel were true. It is plain, if the Gospel turned out a fable, (which God forbid,) but if so, he would have taken his line most unskilfully ; he would be in a great mistake, and would have suffered a loss. He would be like a merchant whose vessels were wrecked, or whose correspondents had failed. Man has confidence in man, he trusts to the credit of his neighbour ; but Christians do not risk largely upon their Saviour's word ; and this is the one thing they have to do. Christ tells us Himself, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations ;"* *i. e.* buy an interest in the next world with that wealth which this world uses unrighteously ; feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the sick, and it shall turn to "bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not."† Thus almsdeeds, I say, are an intelligible *venture*, and an evidence of faith.

So again, the man who, when his prospects in the world are good, gives up the promise of wealth or of eminence, in order to be nearer Christ, to have a place in His temple, to have more opportunity for prayer and praise, he makes a sacrifice.

* Luke xvi. 9.

† Luke xii. 33.

Or he who, from a noble striving after perfection, puts off the desire of worldly comforts, and is, like Daniel or St. Paul, in much labour and business, yet with a solitary heart, he too ventures something upon the certainty of the world to come.

Or he who, after falling into sin, repents in deed as well as in word ; puts some yoke upon his shoulder ; subjects himself to punishment ; is severe upon his flesh ; denies himself innocent pleasures ; or puts himself to public shame,—he too shows that his faith is the realizing of things hoped for, the warrant of things not seen.

Or again : he who only gets himself to pray against those things which the many seek after, and to embrace what the heart naturally shrinks from ; he who, when God's will seems to tend towards worldly ill, while he deprecates it, yet prevails on himself to say heartily, "Thy will be done ;" he, even, is not without his sacrifice. Or he who, being in prospect of wealth, honestly prays God that he may never be rich ; or he who is in prospect of station, and earnestly prays that he may never have it ; or he who has friends or kindred, and acquiesces with an entire heart in their removal while it is yet doubtful, who can say, "Take them away, if it be Thy will, to Thee I give them up, to Thee I commit them ;" who is willing to be taken at his word ; he too risks somewhat, and is accepted.

Such a one is taken at his word, while he understands not, perhaps, what he says ; but he is accepted, as meaning somewhat, and risking much. Generous hearts, like James and John, or Peter, often speak largely and confidently beforehand of what they will do for Christ, not insincerely, yet ignorantly ; and for their sincerity's sake they are taken at their word as a reward, though they have yet to learn how serious that word is. "They say unto Him, We are able ;"—and the vow is recorded in heaven. This is the case of all of us at many seasons. First, at Confirmation ; when we promise what was promised for us at Baptism, yet not being able to understand how much we promise, but rather trusting to God gradually to reveal it, and to give us strength according to our day. So again, they who enter Holy Orders promise they know not what, engage themselves they know not how deeply, debar themselves of the world's ways they know not how intimately, find perchance they must cut off from them the right hand, sacrifice the desire of their eyes and the stirring of their hearts at the foot of the Cross, while they thought, in their simplicity, they were but choosing the quiet easy life of "plain men dwelling in tents." And so again, in various ways, the circumstances of the times cause men at certain seasons to take this path or that, for religion's sake. They know not whither they are being carried ; they see not the end of their course ;

they know no more than this, that it is right to do what they are now doing; and they hear a whisper within them, which assures them, as it did the two holy brothers, that whatever their present conduct involves hereafter, they shall, through God's grace, be equal to it. Those blessed Apostles said, "We are able;" and in truth they were enabled to do and suffer as they had said. St. James was given strength to be steadfast unto death, the death of martyrdom; being slain with the sword in Jerusalem. St. John, his brother, had still more to bear, dying last of the Apostles, as St. James first. He had to bear bereavement, first, of his brother, then of the other Apostles. He had to bear a length of years in loneliness, exile, and weakness. He had to experience the dreariness of being solitary, when those whom he loved had been summoned away. He had to live in his own thoughts, without familiar friend, with those only about him who belonged to a younger generation. Of him were demanded by his gracious Lord, as pledges of his faith, all his eye loved and his heart held converse with. He was as a man moving his goods into a far country, who at intervals and by portions sends them before him, till his present abode is well-nigh unfurnished. He sent forward his friends on their journey, and stayed himself behind, that there might be those in heaven to have thoughts of him, to look out for him, and receive him, when his Lord should call. He sent before him, also, other still more voluntary pledges and ventures of his faith,—a self-denying walk, a zealous maintenance of the truth, fasting and prayers, labours of love, a virgin life, buffetings from the heathen, persecution, and banishment. Well might so great a Saint say, at the end of his life, "Come, Lord Jesus!" as those who are weary of the night, and wait for the morning. All his thoughts, all his contemplations, desires, and hopes, were stored in the invisible world; and death, when it came, brought back to him the sight of what he had worshipped, what he had loved, what he had held intercourse with, in years long past away. Then, when again brought into the presence of what he had lost, how would remembrance revive, and familiar thoughts long buried come to life! Who shall dare to describe the blessedness of those who find all their pledges safe returned to them, all their ventures abundantly and beyond measure satisfied?

Alas! that we, my brethren, have not more of this high and un-earthly spirit! How is it that we are so contented with things as they are,—that we are so willing to be let alone, and to enjoy this life,—that we make such excuses, if any one wishes to press on us the necessity of something higher, the duty of bearing the Cross, if we would earn the Crown of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I repeat it ; what are our ventures and risks upon the truth of His word ? for He says expressly, “ Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name’s sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last ; and the last shall be first.”*

SERMON XXI.

FAITH AND LOVE.

1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 2.

Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing.

I SUPPOSE that all thoughtful readers of the chapter from which these words are taken, have before now been struck with surprise at the varied characteristics which are there given to the excellent grace called love, or charity. What is charity ? St. Paul answers, by giving a great number of properties of it, all distinct and special. It is patient, it is kind, it has no envy, no self-importance, no ostentation, no indecorum, no selfishness, no irritability, no malevolence. Which of all these is it ? for if it is all at once, surely it is a name for all virtues at once.

And what makes this conclusion still more plausible, is, that St. Paul elsewhere actually calls charity “ the fulfilling of the Law ; ” and our Saviour, in like manner, makes our whole duty consist in loving God and loving our neighbour. And St. James calls it “ the royal law ; ” and St. John says, “ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.”† Thus the chapter from which the text is taken seems but an exemplification in detail of what is declared in general terms by these Apostles.

It is well too, by way of contrast, to consider the description of faith

* Matt. xix. 29, 30. † Rom. xiii. 10. Matt. xxii. 40. James ii. 8. 1 John iii. 14.

given elsewhere by the same Apostle, who, in the chapter before us, describes charity. In his Epistle to the Hebrews he devotes a much longer chapter to it; but his method in treating it is altogether different. He starts with a definition of it; and then he illustrates his clear and precise account of it in a series of instances. The chapter is made up of a repetition again and again, in Noah, in Abraham, in Moses, in David, and in the Prophets, of one and the same precisely marked excellence, called faith, which is such as no one can mistake. Again, mention is made of it in the text; and then, though in a different Epistle, and in the midst of a train of thought altogether different, its description, as far as it goes, accurately agrees with what is said in the Hebrews; “. . . . faith, so that I could remove mountains;” which moreover is the very account of it given by our Lord, and expresses surely the same habit of mind as that by which Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, preached righteousness, obtained promises, gave up the world, waxed valiant in fight. How then is it that faith is of so definite a character, and love so large and comprehensive?

Now, the reason seems to be pretty much what at first sight is the difficulty. The difficulty is whether, if love be such as St. Paul describes, it is not all virtues at once; and I answer, that in one sense it *is* all virtues at once, and therefore St. Paul cannot describe it more definitely, more restrictedly than he does. In other words, it is the root of all holy dispositions, and grows and blooms into them; they are its parts; and when it is described, they of necessity are mentioned. Love is the material (so to speak) out of which all graces are made, the quality of mind which is the fruit of regeneration, and in which the Spirit dwells; according to St. John's words, “Every one that loveth, is born of God” “he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”* Such is love, and, as being such, it will last for ever. “Charity,” or love, “never faileth.” Faith and hope are graces of an imperfect state, and they cease with that state; but love is greater, because it is perfection. Faith and hope are graces, because we are in this world, which is for a time; but love is a grace, because we are creatures of God wherever we are, and partakers in a redemption which is to last for ever. Faith is not when there is sight, nor hope when there is enjoyment; but love will, (as we believe) increase more and more to all eternity. Faith and hope are means by which we express our love: we believe God's word, because we love it; we hope after heaven, because we love it. We should not have any hope or concern about it, unless we loved it; we should not

* 1 John iv. 7. 16.

trust or confide in the God of heaven, unless we loved Him. Faith, then, and hope are but instruments or expressions of love; but as to love itself, we do not love because we believe, for the devils believe, yet do not love; nor do we love because we hope, for hypocrites hope, who do not love. But we love for no cause beyond itself: we love, because it is our nature to love; and it is our nature, because God the Holy Ghost has made it our nature. Love is the immediate fruit and the evidence of regeneration.

It is expressing the same thing in other words, to say, as we may, that faith and hope are not in themselves necessarily graces, but only as grafted on and found in love. Balaam had faith and hope, but not love. "May I die the death of the righteous!" is an act of hope. "The word that the Lord putteth into my mouth, that will I speak," is an act of faith; but his conduct showed that neither faith nor hope was loving. The servant in the parable, who fell down at the Lord's feet, and begged to be excused his debt, had both faith and hope. He believed his lord able, and he hoped him willing, to forgive him. He went out, and saw a fellow-servant, who owed him a small sum, and he behaved at once unmercifully to him, and unthankfully by his lord. He had neither love of God, because he was high-minded, nor love of his brother, because he was hard-hearted. There are then two kinds of faith in God, a good faith and a bad faith; and two kinds of hope in God, good and bad: there are not two kinds of love of God. Love must always be heavenly; it is always the sign of the regenerate. Faith and hope are not in themselves signs, but only that faith "which worketh by love," and that hope which "loves the thing which God commandeth, and desires that which God doth promise." In the text it is said "Though I had all faith, yet without love I am nothing:" it is nowhere said "Though I have all love, without faith I am nothing."

Love, then, is the seed of holiness, and grows into all excellences, not indeed destroying their peculiarities, but making them what they are. A weed has stalk, leaves and flowers; so has a sweet-smelling plant; because the latter is sweet-smelling, it does not cease to have stalk, leaves and flowers; but they are all pleasant, because they come of it. In like manner the soul which is quickened with the spirit of love has faith and hope, and a number of faculties and habits, some of which it might have without love, and some not; but any how in that soul one and all exist *in* love, though distinct from it; as stalk, leaves, and flowers are as distinct and entire in one plant as in another, yet vary in their quality, according to the plant's nature.

But here it may be asked whether Scripture does not make faith, not love, the root, and all graces its fruits. I believe not; on the con-

trary, it pointedly intimates that something besides faith is the root, not only in the text, but in our Lord's parable of the Sower ; in which we read of persons who, "when they hear, receive the word with joy," yet having no "root,"* fall away. Now, receiving the word with joy, surely implies faith ; faith, then, is certainly distinct from the *root*, for these persons received with joy, yet have "*no root*." However, it is allowable to call faith the root, because, in a certain sense at least, works *do* proceed from it. And hence Scripture speaks of "*faith working by love*," which in the form of expression would imply that faith was prior to love. And again : in the chapter in which the text occurs, we read of "faith, hope, and charity," an order of words which seems to imply that faith precedes love, or charity. And again : St. Paul says elsewhere, "The *end* of the commandment is *charity*, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of *faith unfeigned*,"† where faith is spoken of as if it were the origin of love.

This must be granted then ; and accordingly a question arises, how to adjust these opposite modes of speaking ; in *what* sense faith is the beginning of love, and in *what* sense love is the origin of faith ; whether love springs from faith, or faith from love, which comes first, and which last. I observe, then, as follows :—

Faith is the first element of *religion*, and love, of *holiness* ; and as holiness and religion are distinct, yet united, so are love and faith. Holiness can exist without religion ; religion cannot exist without holiness. Baptized infants, before they come to years of understanding, are holy ; they are not religious. Holiness is love of the Divine Law. When God regenerates an infant, He imparts to it the gift of His Holy Spirit ; and what is the Spirit thus imparted but the Law written on its heart ? Such was the promise, "I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." And hence it is said, "This is the love of God, that we keep His *commandments*."‡ God comes to us as a Law, before He comes as a Lawgiver ; that is, He sets up His throne within us, and enables us to obey Him, before we have learned to reflect on our own sensations, and to know the voice of God. Such, as if in a type, was Samuel's case ; he knew not who it was that called him, till Eli the priest told him. Eli stands for religion, Samuel for holiness ; Eli for faith, Samuel for love.

Love then is the motion within us of the new spirit, the holy and renewed heart which God the Holy Ghost gives us ; and, as being such, we see how it may exist in infants, who obey the inward law without knowing it, by a sort of natural service, as plants and trees fulfil the

* Luke viii. 13. † 1 Tim. i. 5. ‡ Heb. viii. 10. 1 John v. 3.

functions of their own nature ; a service which is most acceptable to God, as being moral and spiritual, though not intellectual. And this, for what we know, may be the state of those little ones who are baptized and taken away before they have learned either to reason or to sin. They may be as the stones of the Everlasting Pavement, crying out continually in praise to God ; dimly visible, as if absorbed in the glory which encompasses God's throne ; or as the wonderful wheels described by the Prophet, which were living, yet in a way instrumental ; for in heaven where there is no gross matter, the very frame work of the Temple is composed of spirits.

Love, then, is the life of those who know not an external world, but who worship God as manifested within them. Such a life however can last but a little while on earth. The eyes see and the reason embraces a lower world, sun, moon, stars, and earth, and men, and all that man does or makes ; and this external world does not speak of God upon the face of it. It shows as if it were itself God, and an object of worship, or at least it becomes the creature of a usurper, who has made himself "the god of this world." We are at once forced to reflect, reason, decide, and act ; for we are between two, the inward voice speaking one thing within us, and the world speaks another without us ; the world tempting, and the Spirit whispering warnings. Hence faith becomes necessary ; in other words, God has most mercifully succoured us in this contest, by speaking not only in our hearts, but through the sensible world ; and this Voice we call revelation. God has over-ruled this world of sense, and put a word in its mouth, and bid it prophesy of Him. And thus there are two voices even in the external world ; the voice of the tempter calling us to fall down and worship him, and he will give us all ; and the voice of God, speaking in aid of the voice in our hearts : and as love is that which hears the voice within us, so faith is that which hears the voice without us ; and as love worships God within the shrine, faith discerns Him in the world ; and as love is the life of God in the solitary soul, faith is the guardian of love in our intercourse with men ; and while faith ministers to love, love is that which imparts to faith its praise and excellence.

And thus it is that faith is to love as religion to holiness ; for religion is the Divine Law coming to us from without, as love is the fulfilling of the same Law written within. Love then is meditative, tranquil, pure, gentle, abounding in all offices of goodness and truth ; and faith is strenuous and energetic, formed for this world, combating it, training the mind towards love, fortifying it in obedience, and overcoming sense and reason by representations more urgent than their own.

Moreover it is plain, as love is the root out of which faith grows, faith

by receiving the wonderful tidings of the Gospel, and presenting before the soul its sacred Objects, the mysteries of the faith, the Holy Trinity and the Incarnate Saviour, expands our love, and raises it to a perfection which otherwise it could never reach.

And thus our duty lies in faith working by love ; love is the sacrifice we offer to God, and faith is the sacrificer. Yet they are not distinct from each other except in our way of viewing them. Priest and sacrifice are one ; the loving faith and the believing love.

And thus I answer the question concerning the connection of love and faith. Love is the root of faith ; and faith in turn is the cherisher and maturer of love ; it brings love out into works, and therefore is called the root of *works* of love ; the substance of the works is love, the outline and direction of them is faith.

This being so, surely we need not be surprised at St. Paul's language, as in the text and verses following. Love is the true ruling principle of the regenerate soul, and faith ministers to it. Love is the end, faith the means ; and if the means be difficult, much more is the end. St. Paul says that faith which could remove mountains will not avail without love ; and in truth, faith is only half way (as it were) to heaven. By faith we give up the world, but by love we reach unto God's presence ; and it often happens from one cause or another, men are able to get as far as the one, without going on to the other. Too true is it, that the mass of men live neither in faith nor love ; they live to themselves, they love themselves selfishly, and do not desire any thing beyond the visible framework of things. This world is their all in all. But I speak of religious persons ; and these, I think, will confess that distaste for the world is quite a distinct thing from the spirit of love. As years go on, the disappointments, troubles, and cares of life, wean a religious mind from attachment to this world. A man sees it is but vanity. He neither receives, nor does he look for enjoyment from it. He does not look to the future with hope ; he has no prospects ; he cares not for the world's smile or frown ; what it can do, what it can withhold. Nay, even his friends are nothing to him ; he knows they cannot help him really in his greatest needs, and he has no dependence that they will be continued to him. And thus in the course of time, with a very scanty measure of true divine love, he is enabled, whatever his sphere is, to act above the world, in his degree ; to do his plain straightforward duty, because reason tells him he should do it, and because he has no great temptations seducing him from it. Observe, *why* he keeps God's commandments ; from *reason*, because he knows he ought, and because he has no strong motives keeping him from doing so. Alas ! not from *love* towards those commandments. He has only

just so much of the spirit of love as suffices to hinder his resignation from being despondency, and his faith from being dead.

Or again, he has had experience of the misery of a laden conscience, the misery of the pollution involved in the numberless little sins of every day, the odiousness of his pride, vanity, fretfulness, wilfulness, arrogance, irritability, profaneness, hardness of heart, and all the other evils which beset him; and he desires earnestly to be cleansed, yet rather from dislike of sin than direct love of God and Christ. This then is the middle state in which some men may stand in their progress from earth to heaven, and which the text warns us against. It tells us that faith at most but makes a hero, but that love makes a saint; that faith can but put us above the world; but that love brings us under God's throne; that faith can but make us sober, but love makes us happy. It warns us that it is possible for a man to have the clearest, calmest, exactest view of the realities of heaven; that he may most firmly realize and act upon the truths of the Gospel; that he may understand that all about him is but a veil, not a substance; that he may have that full confidence in God's word as to be able to do miracles; that he may have such simple absolute faith as to give up his property, give up all his goods to feed the poor; that he may so scorn the world, that he may with so royal a heart trample on it, as even to give his body to be burned by a glorious martyrdom; and yet,—I do not say, be without love; God forbid! I do not suppose the Apostle means there ever *was* actually such a case, but that it was abstractedly possible; that no one of the proper acts of faith in itself, and necessarily, implies love; that it is distinct from love. He says this, that though a person *be* all that has been said, yet unless he *be* also something besides, unless he *have* love, it profiteth him nothing. O fearful lesson to all those who are tempted to pride themselves in their labours, or sufferings, or sacrifices, or works! We are Christ's, not by faith merely, or by works merely, but by love; not by hating the world, or hating sin, or by venturing for the world to come, or by calmness, or by magnanimity,—though we must do and be all this; and if we *have* love in perfection, we *shall*,—but it is love makes faith, not faith love. We are saved not by any of these things, but by that heavenly flame within us, which, while it consumes what is seen, aspires to what is unseen. Love is the gentle, tranquil, satisfied acquiescence and adherence of the soul in the contemplation of God; not only a preference of God before all things, but a delight in Him because He is God, and because His commandments are good; not any violent emotion or transport, but as St. Paul describes it, long-suffering, kind, modest, unassuming, innocent, simple, orderly, disinterestedness, meek, pure-hearted, sweet-tempered, patient, enduring.

Faith without Charity is dry, harsh, and sapless : it has nothing sweet, engaging, winning, soothing ; but it was Charity which brought Christ down. Charity is but another name for the Comforter. It is eternal Charity which is the bond of all things in heaven and earth ; it is Charity wherein the Father and the Son are one in the unity of the Spirit ; by which the Angels in heaven are one, by which all Saints are one with God, by which the Church is one upon earth.

S E R M O N X X I I .

W A T C H I N G .

MARK xiii. 33.

Take ye heed, watch and pray ; for ye know not when the time is.

OUR Saviour gave this warning when He was leaving this world,—leaving it, that is, as far as His visible presence is concerned. He looked forward to the many hundred years which were to pass before He came again. He knew His own purpose and His Father's purpose gradually to leave the world to itself, gradually to withdraw from it the tokens of His gracious presence. He contemplated, as contemplating all things, the neglect of Him which would spread even among His professed followers ; the daring disobedience, and the loud words, which would be ventured against Him and His Father by many whom he had regenerated ; and the coldness, cowardice, and tolerance of error which would be displayed by others, who did not go so far as to speak or to act against Him. He foresaw the state of the world and the Church, as we see it this day, when His prolonged absence has made it practically thought, that He never will come back in visible presence ; and in the text, He mercifully whispers into our ears, not to trust in what we see, not to share in that general unbelief, not to be carried away by the world, but to “take heed, watch,* pray,” and look out for His coming.

* ἀγρυπνεῖτε.

Surely this gracious warning should be ever in our thoughts, being so precise, so solemn, so earnest. He foretold His first coming, yet He took His Church by surprise when He came; much more will He come suddenly the second time, and overtake men, now that He has not measured out the interval before it, as then He did, but left our watchfulness to the keeping of faith and love.

Let us then consider this most serious question, which concerns every one of us so nearly;—what it is to *watch* for Christ. He says, “*Watch* ye therefore, for ye know not when the master of the house cometh; at even or at midnight, or at the cock crowing, or in the morning; lest coming suddenly He find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch*.”* And again, “If the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have *watched*, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.”† A like warning is given elsewhere both by our Lord and by His Apostles. For instance; we have the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise and five foolish; on whom the bridegroom, after tarrying, came suddenly, and five were found without oil. On which our Lord says, “*Watch* therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”‡ Again He says, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. *Watch* ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”§ In like manner He upbraided Peter thus: “Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou *watch* one hour?”§

In like manner St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. “Now it is high time to awake out of sleep. . . . The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”¶ Again, “*Watch* ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.”** “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might; put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil . . . that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.”†† “Let us not sleep as do others, but let us *watch* and be sober.”‡‡ In like manner St. Peter, “The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and *watch* unto prayer.” “Be sober, be *vigilant*, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.”§§ And

* Mark xii. 35—37. γρηγορεῖτε. † Luke xii. 39. ‡ Matt. xxv. 13.

§ Luke xxi 36 § Mark xiv. 37. ¶ Rom. xii 11, 12. ** 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

†† Eph. vi. 10—13. ‡‡ 1 Thess. v. 6. §§ 1 Pet. iv. 7. νηφελε, v. 8.

St. John, "Behold I come as a thief ; blessed is he that *watcheth* and keepeth his garments."*

Now I consider this word *watching* first used by Christ, then by the favoured Disciple, then by the two great Apostles, Peter and Paul, is a remarkable word ; remarkable because the idea is not so obvious as might appear at first sight, and next because they all inculcate it. We are not simply to believe, but to watch ; not simply to love, but to watch ; not simply to obey, but to watch ; to watch for what ? for that great event, Christ's coming. Whether then we consider what is the obvious meaning of the word, or the Object towards which it directs us, we seem to see a special duty enjoined on us, such as does not naturally come into our minds. Most of us have a general idea what is meant by believing, fearing, loving, and obeying ; but perhaps we do not contemplate or apprehend what is meant by watching.

And I conceive it is one of the main points, which in a practical way, will be found to separate the true and perfect servants of God from the multitude called Christians ; from those who *are*, I do not say false and reprobate, but who are such that we cannot speak much about them, nor can form any notion what will become of them. And in saying this do not understand me as saying, which I do not, that we can tell for certain who are the perfect, and who the double-minded or incomplete Christians ; or that those who discourse and insist upon these subjects are necessarily on the right side of the line. I am but speaking of two *characters*, the true and consistent character, and the inconsistent ; and these I say will be found in no slight degree discriminated and distinguished by this one mark,—true Christians, whoever they are, *watch*, and inconsistent Christians do not. Now what is watching ?

I conceive it may be explained as follows:—Do you know the feeling in matters of this life, of expecting a friend, expecting him to come, and he delays ? do you know what it is to be in unpleasant company, and to wish for the time to pass away, and the hour strike when you may be at liberty ? do you know what it is to be in anxiety lest something should happen which may happen or may not, or to be in suspense about some important event, which makes your heart beat when you are reminded of it, and of which you think the first thing in the morning ? do you know what it is to have a friend in a distant country, to expect news of him, and to wonder from day to day what he is now doing, and whether he is well ? do you know what it is so to live upon a person who is present with you, that your eye follows his, that you read his soul, that you see all its changes in his countenance, that you

* Rev. xvi. 15.

anticipate his wishes, that you smile in his smile, and are sad in his sadness, and are downcast when he is vexed, and rejoice in his successes? To watch for Christ is a feeling such as all these ; as far as feelings of this world are fit to shadow out those of another.

He watches for Christ who has a sensitive, eager, apprehensive mind ; who is awake, alive, quick-sighted, zealous in seeking and honouring Him ; who looks out for Him in all that happens, and who would not be surprised, who would not be over-agitated, or overwhelmed, if he found that He was coming at once ?

And he watches *with* Christ, who, while he looks on to the future, looks back on the past, and does not so contemplate what his Saviour has purchased for him, as to forget what He has suffered for him. He watches with Christ, who ever commemorates and renews in his own person Christ's Cross and agony, and gladly takes up that mantle of affliction which Christ wore here, and left behind Him when He ascended. And hence in the Epistles, often as the inspired writers show their desire for His second coming, as often do they show their memory of His first, and never lose sight of His Crucifixion in His Resurrection. Thus if St. Paul reminds the Romans that they "wait for the redemption of the body" at the Last Day, he also says, "If so be that we *suffer with Him*, that we may be also glorified together." If he speaks to the Corinthians of "waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," he also speaks of "always bearing about in the body the *dying* of the Lord Jesus, *that* the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." If to the Philippians of "the power of His resurrection," he adds at once, "*and the fellowship of His sufferings*, being made conformable unto His death." If he consoles the Colossians with the hope "when Christ shall appear," of their "appearing with Him in glory," he has already declared that he "*fills up that which remains of the afflictions of Christ* in his flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church."* Thus the thought of what Christ is, must not obliterate from the mind the thought of what He was ; and faith is always sorrowing with Him while it rejoices. And the same union of opposite thoughts is impressed on us in Holy Communion, in which we see Christ's death and resurrection together, at one and the same time ; we commemorate the one, we rejoice in the other ; we make an offering, and we gain a blessing.

This then is to watch ; to be detached from what is present, and to live in what is unseen ; to live in the thought of Christ as He came once, and as He will come again ; to desire His second coming, from our affectionate and grateful remembrance of His first. And this it is,

* Rom. viii. 17—23. 1 Cor. i. 7. 2 Cor. iv. 10. Phil. iii. 10. Col. iii. 4 ; i. 24.

which we shall find that men in general are without. They are indeed without faith and love also ; but at least they profess to have these graces, nor is it easy to convince them that they have not. For they consider they have faith, if they do but own that the Bible came from God, or that they trust wholly in Christ for salvation ; and they consider they have love, if they obey some of the most obvious of God's commandments. Love and faith they think they have ; but surely they do not even fancy that they watch. What is meant by watching, and how it is a duty, they have no definite idea ; and thus it accidentally happens that watching is a suitable test of a Christian, in that it is that particular property of faith and love, which, essential as it is, men of this world do not even profess ; that particular property, which is the life or energy of faith and love, the way in which faith and love, if genuine, show themselves.

It is easy to exemplify what I mean from the experience which we all have of life. Many men indeed are open revilers of religion, or at least openly disobey its laws ; but let us consider those who are of a more sober and conscientious cast of mind. They have a number of good qualities, and are in a certain sense and up to a certain point religious ; but they do not watch. Their notion of religion is briefly this ; loving God indeed, but loving this world too ; not only doing their *du/y*, but finding their chief and highest *good*, in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them, resting in it, taking it as their portion. They serve God, and they seek Him ; but they look on the present world as if it were the eternal, not a mere temporary scene of their duties and privileges, and never contemplate the prospect of being separated from it. It is not that they forget God, or do not live by principle, or forget that the goods of this world are His gift, but they love them for their own sake more than for the sake of the Giver, and reckon on their remaining, as if they had the permanence which their duties and religious privileges have. They do not understand that they are called to be strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, and that their worldly lot and worldly goods are a sort of accident of their existence, and that they really have no property, though human law guarantees property to them. Accordingly, they set their heart upon their goods, be they great or little, not without a sense of religion the while, but idolatrously. *This* is their fault,—an identifying God with this world, and therefore an idolatry towards this world ; and so they are rid of the trouble of looking out for their God, for they think they have found Him in the goods of this world. While, then, they are really praiseworthy in many parts of their conduct, benevolent, charitable, kind, neighbourly, and useful in their generation, nay, constant perhaps in the

ordinary religious duties which custom has established, and while they display much right and amiable feeling, and much correctness in opinion, and are even improving in character and conduct as time goes on, correct much that is amiss, gain greater command over themselves, mature in judgment, and are much looked up to in consequence ; yet still it is plain that they love this world, would be loath to leave it, and wish to have more of its good things. They like wealth, and distinction, and credit, and influence. They may improve in conduct, but not in aims ; they advance, but they do not mount ; they are moving on a low level, and were they to move on for centuries, would never rise above the atmosphere of this world.” “I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprovèd.”* This is the temper of mind which they have not ; and when we reflect how rarely it is found among professing Christians, we shall see why our Lord is so urgent in enforcing it ;—as if He said, “I am not warning you, My followers, against open apostasy ; that will not be ; but I foresee that very few will keep awake and watch while I am away. Blessed are the servants who do so ; few will open to Me *immediately*, when I knock. They will have something to do first ; they will have to get ready. They will have to recover from the surprise and confusion which overtake them on the first news of My coming, and will need time to collect themselves, and summon about them their better thoughts and affections. They feel themselves very well off as they are ; and wish to serve God, as they are. They are satisfied to remain on earth ; they do not wish to move ; they do not wish to change.”

Without denying, then, to these persons the praise of many religious habits and practices, I would say that they want the tender and sensitive heart which hangs on the thought of Christ, and lives in His love. The breath of the world has a peculiar power in what may be called rusting the soul. The mirror within them, instead of reflecting back the Son of God, their Saviour, has become dim and discoloured ; and hence, though (to use a common expression) they have a good deal of good *in* them, it is only *in* them, it is not through them, around them, and upon them. An evil crust is *on* them ; they think with the world ; they are full of the world’s notions and modes of speaking ; they appeal to the world, and have a sort of reverence for what the world will say. There is a want of naturalness, simplicity, and childlike teachableness in them. It is difficult to touch them, or (what may be called) get at them, and to persuade them to a straightforward course in reli-

* Heb. ii. 1.

gion. They start off when you least expect it : they have reservations, make distinctions, take exceptions, indulge in refinements, in questions where there are really but two sides, a right and a wrong. Their religious feelings do not flow forth easily, at times when they ought to flow ; either they are difficult, and can say nothing, or else they are affected and strained in their mode of conversing. And as a rust preys upon metal and eats into it, so does this worldly spirit penetrate more and more deeply into the soul which once admits it. And this is one great end, as it would appear, of afflictions, viz. to rub away and clear off these outward defilements, and to keep the soul in a measure of its baptismal purity and brightness.

Now, it cannot surely be doubted that multitudes in the Church are such as I have been describing, and that they would not, could not, at once welcome our Lord on His coming. We cannot, indeed, apply what has been said to this or that individual ; but on the whole, viewing the multitude, one cannot be mistaken ; there may be exceptions ; but after all conceivable deductions, a large body must remain thus doubleminded, thus attempting to unite things incompatible. This we might be sure of, though Christ had said nothing on the subject ; but it is a most affecting and solemn thought, that He has actually called our attention to this very danger, the danger of a worldly religiousness, for so it may be called, though it *is* religiousness ; this mixture of religion and unbelief, which serves God indeed, but loves the fashions, the distinctions, the pleasures, the comforts of this life,—which feels a satisfaction in being prosperous in circumstances, likes pomps and vanities, is particular about food, raiment, house, furniture, and domestic matters, courts great people, and aims at having a position in society. He warns us of the danger of having our minds drawn off from the thought of Him, by whatever cause ; He warns us against *all* excitements, *all* allurements of this world ; He solemnly warns us that the world will not be prepared for His coming, and tenderly intreats of us not to take our portion with the world. He warns us by the instance of the rich man whose soul was required, of the servant who ate and drank, and of the foolish virgins. When He comes, they will one and all want time ; their head will be confused, their eyes will swim, the tongue falter, their limbs totter, as men who are suddenly awakened. They will not all at once collect their senses and faculties. O fearful thought ! the bridal train is sweeping by,—Angels are there,—the just made perfect are there,—little children, and holy teachers, and white-robed saints, and martyrs washed in blood ; the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. She hath already attired herself ; while we have been sleeping, she has been robing ; she

has been adding jewel to jewel, and grace to grace; she has been gathering in her chosen ones, one by one, and has been exercising them in holiness, and purifying them for her Lord; and now her marriage hour is come. The holy Jerusalem is descending, and a loud voice proclaims, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him!" but we, alas! are but dazzled with the blaze of light, and neither welcome the sound, nor obey it,—and all for what? what shall we have gained then? what will this world have then done for us? wretched, deceiving world! which will then be burned up, unable not only to profit us, but to save itself. Miserable hour, indeed, will that be, when the full consciousness breaks on us of what we will not believe now, that we *are* at present serving the world. We trifle with our conscience now; we deceive our better judgment; we repel the hints of those who tell us that we are joining ourselves to this perishing world. We *will* taste a little of its pleasures, and follow its ways, and think it no harm, so that we do not altogether neglect religion. I mean, we allow ourselves to covet what we have not, to boast in what we have, to look down on those who have less; or we allow ourselves to profess what we do not practise, to argue for the sake of victory, and debate when we should be obeying, and we pride ourselves on our reasoning powers, and think ourselves enlightened, and despise those who had less to say for themselves, and set forth and defend our own theories; or we are over-anxious, fretful, and careworn about worldly matters, spiteful, envious, jealous, discontented, and evil-natured; in one or other way we take our portion with this world, and we will not believe that we do. We obstinately refuse to believe it; we know we are not altogether irreligious, and we persuade ourselves that we are religious. We learn to think it is possible to be too religious; we have taught ourselves that there is nothing high or deep in religion, no great exercise of our affections, no great food for our thoughts, no great work for our exertions. We go on in a self-satisfied or a self-conceited way, not looking out of ourselves, not standing like soldiers on the watch, in the dark night; but we kindle our own fire, and delight ourselves in the sparks of it. This is our state, or something like this, and the Day will declare it; the Day is at hand, and the Day will search our hearts, and bring it home even to ourselves, that we have been cheating ourselves with words, and have not served Christ, as the Redeemer of the soul claims, but with a meagre, partial, worldly service, and without really contemplating Him who is above and apart from this world.

Year passes after year silently; Christ's coming is ever nearer than it was. O that, as He comes nearer earth, we may approach nearer heaven! O, my brethren, pray Him to give you the heart to seek Him

in sincerity. Pray Him to make you in earnest. You have one work only, to bear your cross after Him. Resolve in His strength to do so. Resolve to be no longer beguiled by "shadows of religion," by words, or by disputings, or by notions, or by high professions, or by excuses, or by the world's promises or threats. Pray Him to give you what Scripture calls "an honest and good heart," or a perfect heart, and, without waiting, begin at once to obey Him with the best heart you have. Any obedience is better than none,—any profession which is disjoined from obedience, is a mere pretence and deceit. Any religion which does not bring you nearer to God is of the world. You have to seek His face; obedience is the only way of seeking Him. All your duties are obediences. If you are to believe the truths He has revealed, to regulate yourselves by His precepts, to be frequent in His ordinances, to adhere to His Church and people, why is it, except because *He* has bid you? and to do what He bids is to obey Him, and to obey Him is to approach Him. Every act of obedience is an approach,—an approach to Him who is not far off, though He seems so, but close behind this visible screen of things which hides Him from us. He is behind this material framework; earth and sky are but a veil going between Him and us; the day will come when He will rend that veil, and show Himself to us. And then, according as we have waited for Him, will He recompense us. If we have forgotten Him, He will not know us; but "blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. . . . He shall gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."* May this be the portion of every one of us! It is hard to attain it; but it is woful to fail. Life is short; death is certain; and the world to come is everlasting.

* Luke xii. 37, 38.

SERMON XXIII.

KEEPING FAST AND FESTIVAL.*

ECCLESIASTES iii. 4.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

AT Christmas we joy with the natural, unmixed joy of children, but at Easter our joy is highly wrought and refined in its character. It is not the spontaneous and inartificial outbreak which the news of Redemption might occasion, but it is thoughtful; it has a long history before it, and has run through a long course of feelings before it becomes what it is. It is a last feeling, and not a first. St. Paul describes its nature and its formation, when he says, "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."† And the Prophet Isaiah, when he says, "They joy before Thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."‡ Or as it was fulfilled in the case of our Lord Himself, who, as being the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through sufferings. Accordingly, Christmas day is ushered in with a time of awful expectation only, but Easter-day with the long fast of Lent, and the rigours of the Holy Week just past; and it springs out and (as it were) is born of Good Friday.

On such a day, then, from the very intensity of joy which Christians ought to feel, and the trial which they have gone through, they will often be disposed to say little. Rather, like sick people convalescent, when the crisis is past, the illness over, but strength not yet come, they will come forth to the light of day and the freshness of the air, and silently sit down under the shadow of that Tree, with great delight, whose fruit is sweet to their taste. They are disposed rather to muse and be at peace, than to use many words; for their joy has been so

* Preached on Easter-day.

† Rom. v. 3—5.

‡ Isa. ix. 3.

much the child of sorrow, is of so transmuted and complex a nature, so bound up with painful memories and sad associations, that though it is a joy only the greater from the contrast, it is not, cannot be, as if it had never been sorrow.

And in this too the feeling at Easter is not unlike the revulsion of mind on a recovery from sickness, that in sickness also there is much happens to us that is strange, much that we must feebly comprehend and vaguely follow after. For in sickness the mind wanders from things that are seen into the unknown world, it turns back into itself, and is in company with mysteries; it is brought into contact with objects which it cannot describe, which it cannot ascertain. It sees the skirts of powers and providences beyond this world, and is at least more alive, if not more exposed to the invisible influences, bad and good, which are its portion in this state of trial. And afterwards it has recollections which are painful, recollections of distress, of which it cannot recal the reasons, of pursuits without an object, and gleams of relief without continuance. And what is all this but a parallel feeling to that with which the Christian has gone through the contemplations put before his faith in the week just passed, which is to him as a fearful harrowing dream, of which the spell is now broken? The subjects, indeed, which have been brought before him are no dream, but a reality—his Saviour's sufferings, his own misery and sin. But, alas! to him at best they are but a dream, because from lack of faith and of spiritual discernment, he understands them so imperfectly. They have been to him a dream, because only at moments his heart has caught a vivid glimpse of what was continually before his reason,—because the impression it made upon him was irregular, shifting, and transitory,—because even when he contemplated steadily his Saviour's sufferings, he did not, could not understand the deep reasons of them, or the meaning of his Saviour's words,—because what most forcibly affected him came through his irrational nature, was not of the mind but of the flesh, not of the scenes of sorrow which the Lessons and Gospels record, but of his own discomfort of body, which he has been bound, as far as health allows, to make sympathize with the history of those sufferings which are his salvation. And thus, I say, his disquiet during the week has been like that of a bad dream, restless and dreary; he has felt he ought to be very sorry, and could not say why,—could not master his grief, could not realize his fears, but was as children, who wonder, weep, and are silent, when they see their parents in sorrow, from a feeling that there is something wrong, though they cannot say what.

And therefore now, though it is over, he cannot so shake off at once what has been, as to enter fully into what is. Christ indeed, though Ho

suffered and died, yet rose again vigorously on the third day, having loosed the pains of death ; but we cannot accomplish, in our contemplation of Him, what He accomplished really ; for He was the Holy One, and we are sinners. We have the languor and oppression of our old selves upon us, though we be new ; and therefore we must beg Him who is the Prince of Life, the Life Itself, to carry us forth into His new world, for we cannot walk thither, and seat us down whence, like Moses, we may see the land, and meditate upon its beauty.

And yet, though the long season of sorrow which ushers in this Blessed Day, in some sense sobers and quells the keenness of our enjoyment, yet without such preparatory season, let us be sure we shall not rejoice at all. None rejoice in Easter-tide less than those who have not grieved in Lent. This is what is seen in the world at large. To them, one season is the same as another, and they take no account of them. Feast-day and fast-day, holy tide and other tide, are one and the same. Hence they do not realize the next world at all. To them the Gospels are but like another history ; a course of events which took place eighteen hundred years since. They do not make our Saviour's life and death present to them ; they do not transport themselves back to the time of His sojourn on earth. They do not act over again, and celebrate His history, in their own observance ; and the consequence is, that they feel no interest in it. They have neither faith nor love towards it ; it has no hold on them. They do not measure their estimate of things by it ; they do not hold that history as a sort of practical principle in their heart. This is the case not only with the world at large, but too often with men who have the Name of Christ in their mouths. They think they believe in Him, yet when trial comes, or in the daily conduct of life, they are unable to act upon the principles which they profess ; and why ? because they have thought to dispense with the religious Ordinances, the course of Service, and the round of Sacred Seasons of the Church, and have considered it a simpler and more spiritual religion, not to act religiously except when called to it by extraordinary trial or temptation ; because they have thought that, since it is the Christian's duty to rejoice evermore, they would rejoice better if they never sorrowed and never travailed with righteousness. On the contrary, let us be sure that, as previous humiliation sobers our joy, it alone secures it to us. Our Saviour says, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ;" and what is true hereafter, is true here. Unless we have mourned, in the weeks that are gone, we shall not rejoice in the season now commencing. It is often said, and truly, that providential affliction brings a man nearer

to God. What is the observance of Holy Seasons but such a means of grace ?

This too must be said concerning the connection of Fasts and Feasts in our religious service, viz. that that sobriety in feasting which previous fasting causes, is itself much to be prized, and especially worth securing. For in this does Christian mirth differ from worldly, that it is subdued ; and how shall it be subdued except that the past keeps its hold upon us, and while it warns and sobers us, actually indisposes and tames our flesh against indulgence ? In the world feasting comes first and fasting afterwards ; men first glut themselves, and then loathe their excesses ; they take their fill of good, and then suffer ; they are rich that they may be poor ; they laugh that they may weep ; they rise that they may fall. But in the Church of God it is reversed ; the poor *shall* be rich, the lowly shall be exalted, those that sow in tears shall reap in joy, those that mourn shall be comforted, those that suffer with Christ shall reign with Him ; even as Christ (in our Church's words) "went not up to joy, but first He suffered pain. He entered not into His glory before He was crucified. So truly our way into eternal joy is to suffer here with Christ, and our door to enter into eternal life is gladly to die with Christ, that we may rise again from death, and dwell with Him in everlasting life."* And what is true of the general course of our redemption is, I say, fulfilled also in the yearly and other commemorations of it. Our Festivals are preceded by humiliation, that we may keep them duly ; not boisterously, or fanatically, but in a refined, subdued, chastised spirit, which is the true rejoicing in the Lord.

In such a spirit let us endeavour to celebrate this most holy of all Festivals, this continued festal Season, which lasts for fifty days, whereas Lent is forty, as if to show that where sin abounded, there much more has grace abounded. Such indeed seems the tone of mind which possessed the Apostles when the news of the Resurrection was brought to them ; and while they waited for, witnessed, and thought of their risen Lord. If we consider, we shall find the accounts of it in the Gospels, marked with much of pensiveness and tender and joyful melancholy ; the sweet and pleasant frame of those who have gone through pain and out of pain receive pleasure. Whether we read the account of St. Mary Magdalen weeping at the sepulchre, seeing Jesus and knowing Him not, recognizing His voice, attempting to embrace His feet, and then sinking into silent awe and delight, till she rose and hastened to tell the perplexed Apostles ;—or turn to the account of that solemn meeting, which was the third, when He stood on the shore and addressed them, and Peter plunged into the water, and then with the rest was

* Visitation of the Sick.

awed into silence and durst not speak, but only obeyed His commands, and ate of the fish in silence, and so remained in the presence of One, in whom they joyed, whom they loved, as He knew, more than all things, till He broke silence by asking Peter if he loved Him :—or lastly, consider the time when He appeared unto a great number of disciples on the mountain in Galilee, and all worshipped Him, but some doubted :—who does not see that their Festival was such as I have been describing it, a holy, tender, reverent, manly joy, not *so* manly as to be rude, not *so* tender as to be effeminate, but (as if) an Angel's mood, the mingled offering of all that is best and highest in man's and woman's nature brought together,—St. Mary Magdalen and St. Peter blended into St. John? And here perhaps we learn a lesson from the deep silence which Scripture observes concerning the Blessed Virgin* after the Resurrection ; as if she, who was too pure and holy a flower to be more than seen here on earth, even during the season of her Son's humiliation, was altogether drawn by the Angels within the veil on His resurrection, and had her joy in Paradise with Gabriel who had been the first to honour her, and with those elder Saints who arose after the Resurrection, appeared in the Holy City, and then vanished away.

May we partake in such calm and heavenly joy ; and, while we pray for it, recollecting the while that we are still on earth, and our duties in this world, let us never forget that while our love must be silent, our faith must be vigorous and lively. Let us never forget that in proportion as our love is “rooted and grounded” in the next world, our faith must branch forth like a fruitful tree into this. The calmer our hearts, the more active be our lives ; the more tranquil we are, the more busy ; the more resigned, the more zealous ; the more unruffled, the more fervent. This is one of the many paradoxes in the world's judgment which the Christian realizes in himself. Christ is risen ; He is risen from the dead. We may well cry out, “Alleluia, the Lord omnipotent reigneth.” He has crushed all the power of the enemy under His feet. He has gone upon the lion and the adder. He has stopped the lion's mouth for us his people, and has bruised the serpent's head. There is nothing impossible to us now, if we do but enter into the fulness of our privileges, the wondrous power of our gifts. The thing cannot be named in heaven or earth within the limits of truth and obedience which we cannot do through Christ ; the petition cannot be named which may not be accorded to us for His Name's sake. For, we who have risen with Him from the grave, stand in his might ; we are allowed to use His weapons. His infinite influence with the Father is ours, not always

* Vide Christian Year. Fourth Sunday in Lent.

to use, for perchance in this or that effort we make, or petition we prefer, it would not be good for us; but so far ours, so fully ours, that when we ask and do things according to His will, we are really possessed of a power with God, and do prevail:—so that little as we may know when and when not, we are continually possessed of heavenly weapons, we are continually touching the springs of the most wonderful providences in heaven and earth; and by the Name, and the Sign, and the Blood of the Son of God, we are able to make devils tremble and Saints rejoice. Such are the arms which faith uses, small in appearance, yet “not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;”^{*} despised by the world, a mere word, and a mere symbol, and what seems mere bread and wine; but God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and, as all things spring from small beginnings, from seeds and elements invisible or insignificant, so when God would renew the race of man, and reverse the course of human life and earthly affairs, He chose cheap things for the rudiments of His work, and bade us believe that He *could* work through them, and He would do so. As then we Christians discern in Him, when He came on earth, not the carpenter’s son, but the Eternal Word Incarnate, as we see beauty in Him in whom the world saw no form or comeliness, as we discern in that death an Atonement for sin in which the world saw nought but a malefactor’s sentence; so let us believe with full persuasion that all that He has bequeathed to us has power from Him. Let us accept His Ordinances, and His Creed, and His precepts; and let us stand upright with an undaunted faith, resolute, with faces like flint, to serve Him in and through them; to inflict them upon the world without misgiving, without wavering, without anxiety; being sure that He who saved us from hell through a Body of flesh which the world insulted, tortured, and triumphed over, much more can now apply the benefits of His passion through Ordinances which the world has lacerated and now mocks.

This then, my brethren, be our spirit on this day, God rested from His labours on the seventh day, yet He worketh evermore. Christ entered into His rest, yet He too ever works. We too, if it may be said, in adoring and lowly imitation of what is infinite, while we rest in Christ and rejoice in His shadow, let us too beware of sloth and cowardice, but serve Him with steadfast eyes yet active hands; that we may be truly His in our hearts, as we were made His by Baptism,—as we are made His continually by the recurring celebration of His purifying Fasts and holy Feasts.

^{*} 2 Cor. x. 4.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS,
FOR THE
WINTER QUARTER,
BEING
THE WEEKS BETWEEN ADVENT SUNDAY AND LENT.

VOL. V.
OF THE LONDON EDITION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE weeks between Advent Sunday and Lent may fitly be considered as the Season of Grace ; of which Christmas-day is the great festival, and St. Paul the special Apostle. The following Sermons, selected for this portion of the year, are written upon subjects more or less suggested by its main idea, though not so intimately adapted to it in their form, as to render them unsuitable to other seasons. As few express allusions, as was possible, have been made to it in the text; and they are noted at the foot of the page as they occur. }

ORIEL COLLEGE, *October 21, 1840.*

SERMON I.

WORSHIP, A PREPARATION FOR CHRIST'S COMING.

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : They shall behold the land that is very far off.

YEAR after year, as it passes, brings us the same warnings again and again, and none perhaps more impressive than those with which it comes to us at this season.* The very frost and cold, rain and gloom, which now befall us, forebode the last dreary days of the world, and in religious hearts raise the thought of them. The year is worn out ; spring, summer, autumn, each in turn, have brought their gifts and done their utmost ; but they are over, and the end is come. All is past and gone, all has failed, all has sated : we are tired of the past : we would not have the seasons longer ; and the austere weather which succeeds, though ungrateful to the body, is in tone with our feelings, and acceptable. Such is the frame of mind which befits the end of the year ; and such the frame of mind which comes alike on good and bad at the end of life. The days have come in which they have no pleasure ; yet they would hardly be young again, could they be so by wishing it. Life is well enough in its way ; but it does not satisfy. Thus the soul is cast forward upon the future, and in proportion as its conscience is clear, and its perception keen and true, does it rejoice solemnly that “the night is far spent, the day is at hand,” that there are “new heavens and a new earth” to come, though the former are failing ; nay, rather that, because they are failing, it will “soon see the King in His beauty,” and “behold the land which is very far off.” These are feelings for holy men in winter and in age, waiting, in some dejection perhaps, but with comfort on the whole, and calmly though earnestly, for the Advent of Christ.

* Advent.

And such too are the feelings with which we now come before Him in prayer day by day. The season is chill and dark, and the breath of the morning is damp, and worshippers are few, but all this befits those who are by profession penitents and mourners, watchers and pilgrims. More dear to them that loneliness, more cheerful that severity, and more bright that gloom, than all those aids and appliances of luxury by which men now-a-days attempt to make prayer less disagreeable to them. True faith does not covet comforts. It only complains when it is forbidden to kneel, when it reclines upon cushions, is protected by curtains, and encompassed by warmth. Its only hardship is to be hindered, or to be ridiculed, when it would place itself as a sinner before its Judge. They who realize that awful Day when they shall see Him face to face, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will as little bargain to pray pleasantly now, as they will think of doing so then.

One year goes and then another, but the same warnings recur. The frost or the rain comes again ; the earth is stripped of its brightness ; there is nothing to rejoice in. And then amid this unprofitableness of earth and sky, the well-known words return ; the Prophet Isaiah is read ; the same Epistle and Gospel, bidding us "awake out of sleep," and welcome Him "that cometh in the Name of the Lord ;" the same Collects, beseeching Him to prepare us for judgment. O blessed they who obey these warning voices, and look out for Him whom they have not seen, because they "love His appearing !"

We cannot have fitter reflections at this Season than those which I have entered upon. What may be the destiny of other orders of beings we know not ;—but this we know to be our own fearful lot, that before us lies a time when we must have the sight of our Maker and Lord face to face. We know not what is reserved for other beings ; there may be some, which, knowing nothing of their Maker, are never to be brought before Him. For what we can tell, this may be the case with the brute creation. It may be the law of their nature that they should live and die, or live on an indefinite period, upon the very outskirts of His government, sustained by Him, but never permitted to know or approach Him. But this is not our case. We are destined to come before Him ; nay, and to come before Him in judgment ; and that on our first meeting ; and that suddenly. We are not merely to be rewarded or punished, we are to be judged. Recompense is to come upon our actions, not by a mere general provision or course of nature, as it does at present, but from the Lawgiver Himself in person. We have to stand before His righteous Presence, and that one by one. One by one we shall have to endure His holy and searching eye. At present we are in a world of shadows. What we see is not substantial. Suddenly

it will be rent in twain and vanish away, and our Maker will appear. And then, I say, that first appearance will be nothing less than a personal intercourse between the Creator and every creature. He will look on us, while we look on Him.

I need hardly quote any of the numerous passages of Scripture which tell us this by way of proof; but it may impress the truth of it upon our hearts to do so. We are told then expressly, that good and bad shall see God. On the one hand holy Job says, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." On the other hand unrighteous Balaam says, "I shall see Him, but not now, I shall behold Him, but not nigh; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Christ says to His disciples, "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh;" and to His enemies, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And it is said generally of all men, on the one hand, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." And on the other, "When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." Again, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face;" and again, "They shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads."*

And, as they see Him, so will He see them, for His coming will be to judge them. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," says St. Paul. Again, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." And again, "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory. And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."†

Such is our first meeting with our God; and, I say, it will be as sudden as it is intimate. "Yourselves know perfectly," says St. Paul, "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." This is said of the wicked,—elsewhere He is said to surprise good as well as bad. "While the Bridegroom tarried," the wise and

* Job xix. 26, 27. Numb. xxiv. 17. Luke xxi. 28. Matt. xxvi. 64. Rev. i. 7. 1 John iii. 2. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

† 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12. Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

foolish virgins "all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him."*

Now when this state of the case, the prospect that lies before us, is brought home to our thoughts, surely it is one which will lead us anxiously to ask, Is this all that we are told, all that is allowed us, or done for us? Do we know only this, that all is dark now, and all will be light then? that now God is hidden, and one day will be revealed? that we are in a world of sense, and are to be in a world of spirits? For surely it is our plain wisdom, our bounden duty, to prepare for this great change;—and if so, are any directions, hints, or rules given us *how* we are to prepare? "Prepare to meet thy God," "Go ye out to meet Him," is the dictate of natural reason, as well as of inspiration. But *how* is this to be?

Now observe, that it is scarcely a sufficient answer to this question to say that we must strive to obey Him, and so to approve ourselves to Him. This indeed might be enough, were reward and punishment to follow in the mere way of nature, as they do in this world. But, when we come steadily to consider the matter, appearing before God, and dwelling in His presence, is a very different thing from being merely subjected to a system of moral laws, and would seem to require another preparation, a special preparation of thought and affection, such as will enable us to endure His countenance, and to hold communion with Him as we ought. Nay, and, it may be, a preparation of the soul itself for His presence, just as the bodily eye must be exercised in order to bear the full light of day, or the bodily frame in order to bear exposure to the air.

But, whether or not this be safe reasoning, Scripture precludes the necessity of it, by telling us that the Gospel Covenant is intended, among its other purposes, to prepare us for this future glorious and wonderful destiny, the sight of God, a destiny which, if not most glorious, will be most terrible. And in the worship and service of Almighty God, which Christ and His Apostles have left to us, we are vouchsafed means, both moral and mystical, of approaching God, and gradually learning to bear the sight of Him.

This indeed is the most momentous reason for religious worship, as far as we have grounds for considering it a true one. Men sometimes ask, Why need they *profess* religion? Why need they go to Church? Why need they observe certain rites and ceremonies? Why need they watch, pray, fast, and meditate? Why is it not enough to be just, honest, sober, benevolent, and otherwise virtuous? Is not this the true

* 1 Thess. v. 2, 3. Matt. xxv. 5, 6.

and real worship of God? Is not activity in mind and conduct the most acceptable way of approaching Him? How can they please Him by submitting to certain religious forms, and taking part in certain religious acts? Or if they must do so, why may they not choose their own? Why must they come to Church for them? Why must they be partakers in what the Church calls Sacraments? I answer, they must do so, first of all and especially, because God tells them so to do. But besides this, I observe that we see this plain reason why, that they are one day to change their state of being. They are not to be here for ever. Direct intercourse with God on their part now, prayer and the like, may be necessary to our meeting Him suitably hereafter: and direct intercourse on His part with us, or what we call sacramental communion, may be necessary in some incomprehensible way, even for preparing our very nature to bear the sight of Him.

Let us then take this view of religious service; it is "going out to meet the Bridegroom," who, if not seen "in His beauty," will appear in consuming fire. Besides its other momentous reasons, it is a preparation for an awful event, which shall one day be. What it would be to meet Christ at once without preparation, we may learn from what happened even to the Apostles when His glory was suddenly manifested to them. St. Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." And St. John, "when He saw Him, fell at His feet as dead."*

This being the case, it is surely most merciful in God to vouchsafe to us the means of preparation, and such means as He has appointed. When Moses came down from the Mount, and the people were dazzled at his countenance, he put a veil over it. That veil is so far removed in the Gospel, that we are in a state of preparation for its being altogether removed. We are with Moses in the Mount so far, that we have a sight of God; we are with the people beneath it so far, that Christ does not visibly show Himself. He has put a veil on, and He sits among us silently and secretly. When we approach Him, we know it only by faith, and when He manifests Himself to us, it is without our being able to realize to ourselves that manifestation.

Such then is the spirit in which we should come to all His ordinances, considering them as forestallings and first fruits of that sight of Him which one day must be. When we kneel down in prayer in private, let us think to ourselves—Thus shall I one day kneel down before His very footstool—in this flesh and this blood of mine; and He will be seated over against me—in flesh and blood also, though divine. I come, with the thought of that awful hour before me, I come to confess

* Luke v. 8. Rev. i. 17.

my sin to Him now, that He may pardon it then, and I say, "O Lord, Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, deliver us, O Lord!"

Again, when we come to Church, then let us say :—The day will be when I shall see Christ surrounded by His Holy Angels. I shall be brought into that blessed company, in which all will be pure, all bright. I come then to learn to endure the sight of the Holy One and His Servants; to nerve myself for a vision which is fearful before it is ecstatic, and which they only enjoy whom it does not consume. When men in this world have to undergo any great thing, they prepare themselves beforehand, by thinking often of it, and they call this making up their mind. Any unusual trial, they thus make familiar to them. Courage is a necessary step in gaining certain goods, and courage is gained by steady thought. Children are scared, and close their eyes, at the vision of some mighty warrior or glorious king. And when Daniel saw the Angel, like St. John, "his comeliness was turned in him into corruption, and he retained no strength."* I come then to Church, because I am an heir of heaven. It is my desire and hope one day to take possession of my inheritance: and I come to make myself ready for it, and I would not see heaven yet, for I could not ^{properly} bare to see it. I am allowed to be in it without seeing it, that I may learn to see it. And by psalm and sacred song, by confession and by praise, I learn my part.

And what is true of the ordinary services of religion, public and private, holds in a still higher or rather in a special way, as regards the sacramental ordinances of the Church. In these is manifested in a greater or less degree, according to the measure of each, that Incarnate Saviour, who is one day to be our judge, and who is enabling us to bear His presence then, by imparting it to us in measure now. A thick black veil is spread between this world and the next. We mortal men range up and down it, to and fro, and see nothing. There is no access through it into the next world. In the Gospel this veil is not removed; it remains, but every now and then marvellous disclosures are made to us of what is behind it. At times we seem to catch a glimpse of a Form which we shall hereafter see face to face. We approach, and in spite of the darkness, our hands, or our head, or our brow, or our lips become, as it were, sensible of the contact of something more than earthly. We know not where we are, but we have been bathing in water, and a voice tells us that it is blood. Or we have a mark signed upon our foreheads, and it spake of Calvary. Or we recollect a hand laid upon our heads, and surely it had the print of nails in it, and re-

* Dan. x. 8.

sembled His who with a touch gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. Or we have been eating and drinking ; and it was not a dream, surely, that One fed us from His wounded side, and renewed our nature by the heavenly meat He gave. Thus in many ways He, who is to judge us, prepares us to be judged,—He, who is to glorify us, prepares us to be glorified, that He may not take us unawares ; but that when the voice of the Archangel sounds, and we are called to meet the Bridegroom, we may be ready.

Now consider what light these reflections throw upon some remarkable texts in the Epistle to the Hebrews. If we have in the Gospel this supernatural approach to God and to the next world, no wonder that St. Paul calls it an “enlightening,” “a tasting of the heavenly gift,” a being “made partaker of the Holy Ghost,” a “tasting of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.” No wonder too that utter apostasy after receiving it should be so utterly hopeless, and that in consequence, any profanation of it, any sinning against it, should be so perilous in proportion to its degree. If He, who is to be our judge, condescend here to manifest Himself to us, surely if that privilege does not fit us for his future glory, it does but prepare us for his wrath.

And what I have said concerning Ordinances applies still more fully to Holy Seasons, which include in them the celebration of many Ordinances. They are times when we may humbly expect a larger grace, because they invite us especially to the means of grace. This in particular is a time for purification of every kind.* When Almighty God was to descend upon Mount Sinai, Moses was told to “sanctify the people,” and bid them “wash their clothes,” and to “set bounds to them round about :” much more is this a season for “cleansing ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ;”† a season for chastened hearts and religious eyes ; for severe thoughts, and austere resolves, and charitable deeds ; a season for remembering what we are and what we shall be. Let us go out to meet Him with contrite and expectant hearts ; and though he delays His coming, let us watch for Him in the cold and dreariness which must one day have an end. Attend his summons we must, at any rate, when He strips us of the body ; let us anticipate, by a voluntary act, what will one day come on us of necessity. Let us wait for Him solemnly, fearfully, hopefully, patiently, obediently ; let us be resigned to his will while active in good works. Let us pray Him ever to “remember us when He cometh in his kingdom ;” to remember all our friends ; to remember our enemies ; and to visit us according to his mercy here, that he may reward us according to his righteousness hereafter.

* Advent.

† Ex. xix. 10—12. 2 Cor. vii. 1.

SERMON II.

REVERENCE, A BELIEF IN GOD'S PRESENCE.

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty : they shall behold the land that is very far off.

THOUGH Moses was not permitted to enter the land of promise, he was vouchsafed a sight of it from a distance. We too, though as yet we are not admitted to heavenly glory, yet are given to see much in preparation for seeing more. Christ dwells among us in his Church really though invisibly, and through its Ordinances fulfils towards us, in a true and sufficient sense the promise of the text. We are even now permitted to "see the King in His beauty," to "behold the land that is very far off." The words of the Prophet relate to our present state as well as to the state of saints hereafter. Of the future glory it is said by St. John, "They shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads."* And of the present, Isaiah himself speaks in passages which may be taken in explanation of the text ; "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;" and again, "They shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."† We do not see God face to face under the Gospel, but still, for all that, it is true that "we know in part;" we see, though it be "through a glass darkly;"—which is far more than any but Christians are enabled to do. Baptism, by which we become Christians, is an illumination ; and Christ, who is the Object of our worship, is withal a Light to worship by.

Such a view is strange to most men ; they do not realize the presence of Christ, nor admit the duty of realizing it. Even those who are not without habits of seriousness, have almost or quite forgotten the

* Rev. xxii. 4.]

† Isa. xl. 5 ; xxxv. 2.

duty. This is plain at once : for, unless they had, they would not be so very deficient in reverence as they are. It is scarcely too much to say that awe and fear are at the present day all but discarded from religion. Whole societies called Christian make it almost a first principle to disown the duty of reverence ; and we ourselves, to whom as children of the Church reverence is as a special inheritance, have very little of it, and do not feel the want of it. Those who, in spite of themselves, are influenced by God's holy fear, too often are ashamed of it, consider it even as a mark of weakness of mind, hide their feeling as much as they can, and when ridiculed or censured for it, cannot defend it to themselves on intelligible grounds. They wish indeed to maintain reverence in their mode of speaking and acting, in relation to sacred things, but they are at a loss how to answer objections, or how to resist received customs and fashions ; and at length they begin to be suspicious and afraid of their own instinctive feelings. Let us then take occasion from the promise in the text both to describe the religious defect to which I have alluded, and to state the remedy for it.

There are two classes of men who are deficient in awe and fear, and, lamentable to say, taken together, they go far to make up the religious portion of the community. This is lamentable indeed, if so it is : it is not wonderful that sinners should live without the fear of God ; but what shall we say of an age or country, in which even the more serious classes, those who live on principle, and claim to have a judgment in religious matters, who look forward to the future, and think that their account stands fair, and that they are in God's favour, when even such persons maintain, or at least act as if they maintained, that "the spirit of God's holy fear" is no part of religion. "If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

These are the two classes of men who are deficient in this respect : first, those who think that they never were greatly under God's displeasure ; next, those who think that, though they once were, they are not at all now, for all sin has been forgiven them ;—those on the one hand who consider that sin is no great evil in itself, those on the other who consider that it is no great evil in them, because their persons are accepted in Christ for their faith's sake.

Now it must be observed that the existence of fear in religion does not depend on the circumstance of our being sinners ; it is short of that. Were we pure as the Angels, yet in his sight, one should think, we could not but fear, before whom the heavens are not clean, nor the Angels free from folly. The Seraphim themselves veiled their faces while they cried, Glory. Even then were it true that sin were not a great evil, or were no great evil in us, nevertheless the mere circum-

stance that God is infinite and all-perfect is an overwhelming thought to creatures and mortal men, and ought to lead all persons who profess religion to profess also religious fear, however natural it is for irreligious men to disclaim the feeling.

And next let it be observed, it is no dispute about terms. For at first sight we may be tempted to think that the only question is whether the word "fear" is a good or bad word ;—that one man makes it all one with slavish dread, and another with godly awe and reverence ;—and that therefore they seem to oppose each other, when they do not—as if both parties agreed that reverence is right and selfish terror wrong, and the only point between them were, to whether of these two the word fear properly belonged. This is not the case, it is a question not of words but of things ; for these persons whom I am describing plainly consider that state of mind wrong, which the Church Catholic has ever prescribed and her Saints ever exemplified.

To show that this is so, I will in a few words state what the two sects of opinion are to which I allude ; and what that fault is, which, widely as they differ in opinion from each other, they have in common.

The one class of persons consists of those who think the Catholic Creed too strict,—who hold that no certain doctrines need be believed in order to salvation, or at least question the necessity ; who say that it matters not what a man believes, so that his conduct is respectable and orderly,—who think that all rites and ceremonies are mere niceties (as they speak) and trifles, and that a man pleases God equally by observing them or not,—who perhaps go on to doubt whether Christ's death is strictly speaking an atonement for the sin of man,—who, when pressed, do not allow that He is strictly speaking and literally God,—and who deny that the punishment of the wicked is eternal. Such are the tenets, more or less clearly apprehended and confessed, which mark the former of the two classes of which I speak.

The other class of men are in their formal doctrines widely different from the former. They consider that, though they were by nature children of wrath, they are now by God's grace so fully in his favour, that, were they to die at once, they would be certain of heaven,—they consider that God so absolutely forgives them day by day their trespasses, that they have nothing to answer for, nothing to be tried upon at the Last Day,—that they have been visited by God's grace in a manner quite distinct from all around them, and are his children in a sense in which others are not, and have an assurance of their saving state peculiar to themselves, and an interest in the promises such as Baptism does not impart ;—they profess to be thus beyond the reach of

doubt and anxiety, and they say that they should be miserable without such a privilege.

I have alluded to these schools of religion, to show how widely a feeling must be spread which such contrary classes of men have in common. Now what they agree in is this: in considering God as simply a God of love, not of awe and reverence also,—the one meaning by love *benevolence*, and the other *mercy*; and in consequence neither the one nor the other regard Almighty God with *fear*; and the signs of want of fear in both the one and the other, which I proposed to point out, are such as the following.

For instance:—they have no scruple or misgiving in speaking freely of Almighty God. They will use His Name as familiarly and lightly, as if they were open sinners. The one class adopts a set of words to denote Almighty God, which remove the idea of His personality, speaking of Him as the “Deity,” or the “Divine Being;” which, as they use them, are of all others most calculated to remove from the mind the thought of a living and intelligent Governor, their Saviour and their Judge. The other class of persons going into the other extreme, but with the same result, use freely that incommunicable Name by which He has vouchsafed to denote to us His perfections. When He appeared to Moses He disclosed His Name; and that Name has appeared so sacred to our translators of Scripture, that they have scrupled to use it, though it occurs continually in the Old Testament, substituting the word “Lord” out of reverence. Now the persons in question delight in a familiar use, in prayers and hymns and conversation, of that Name by which they designate Him before whom Angels tremble. Not even our fellow-men do we freely call by their own names, unless we are at our ease with them; yet sinners can bear to be familiar with the Name by which they know the Most High has distinguished Himself from all creatures.

Another instance of want of fear, is the bold and unscrupulous way in which persons speak of the Holy Trinity and the Mystery of the Divine Nature. They use sacred terms and phrases, should occasion occur, in a rude and abrupt way, and discuss points of doctrine concerning the All-holy and Eternal, even (if I may without irreverence state it) even over their cups, perhaps arguing against them, as if He were such a one as themselves.

Another instance of this want of fear is found in the peremptory manner in which men lay down what Almighty God must do, what He cannot but do, as if they were masters of the whole scheme of salvation, and might anticipate His high providence and will.

And another is the confidence with which they often speak of their

having been converted, pardoned, and sanctified, as if they knew their own state as well as God knows it.

Another is the unwillingness so commonly felt to bow at the Name of Jesus, nay the impatience exhibited towards those who do; as if there were nothing awful in the idea of the Eternal God being made man, and as if we did not suitably express our wonder and awe at it by practising what St. Paul has in very word prescribed.

Another instance is the careless mode in which men speak of our Lord's earthly doings and sayings, just as if he were a mere man. He was man indeed, but He was more than man: and He did what man does, but then those deeds of His were the deeds of God,—and we can as little separate the deed from the Doer as our arm from our body. But, in spite of this, numbers are apt to use rude, familiar, profane language, concerning their God's childhood, and youth, and ministry, though He is their God.

And another is the familiarity with which many persons address our Lord in prayer, applying epithets to Him, and adopting a strain of language which does not beseeem creatures, not to say sinners.

And another is their general mode of prayer; I mean in diffuse and free language, with emphatic and striking words, in a sort of coloured or rich style, with pomp of manner, and an oratorical tone, as if praying were preaching, and as if its object were not to address Almighty God, but to impress and effect those who heard it.

And another instance of this want of reverence is the introduction, in speaking or writing, of serious and solemn words, for the sake of effect, to round, or to give dignity to, a sentence.

And another instance is irreverence in Church, sitting instead of kneeling in prayer, or pretending to kneel but really sitting, or lounging or indulging in other unseemly attitudes; and, much more, looking about when prayers are going on, and observing what others are doing.

These are some of a number of peculiarities which mark the religion of the day, and are instanced, some in one class of persons, some in another; but all by one or other;—and they are specimens of what I mean when I say that the religion of this day is destitute of *fear*.

Many other instances might be mentioned of very various kinds. For instance, the freedom with which men propose to alter God's ordinances, to suit their own convenience, or to meet the age; their reliance on their private and antecedent notions about sacred subjects; their want of interest and caution in inquiring what God's probable will is; their contempt for any view of the Sacraments which exceeds the evidence of their senses; and their confidence in settling the order of importance in which the distinct articles of Christian faith stand:—

all which shows that it is no question of words whether men have fear or not, but that there *is* a something they really have not, whatever name we give it.

So far I consider to be plain:—the only point which can be debated is this, whether the feelings which I have been describing are necessary; for each of the two classes which I have named contends that they are unnecessary; the one decides them inconsistent with reason, the other with the Gospel; the one calls them superstitious, and the other legal or Jewish. Let us then consider, are these feelings of fear and awe Christian feelings or not? A very few words will surely be sufficient to decide the question.

I say this, then, which I think no one can reasonably dispute. They are the class of feelings we *should* have, yes, have in an intense degree, if we literally had the sight of Almighty God; therefore they are the class of feelings which we shall have, *if* we realize His presence. In proportion as we believe that He is present, we shall have them; and to have them, is not to realize, not to believe that He is present. If then it is a duty to feel as though we saw Him, or to have faith, it is a duty to have these feelings; and if it is a sin to be destitute of faith, it is a sin to be without them. Let us consider this awhile.

Who then is there to deny, that if we saw God, we should fear? take the most cold and secular of all those who explain away the Gospel; or take the most heated and fanatic of those who consider it peculiarly their own; take those who think that Christ has brought us nothing great, or those who think He has brought it all to themselves,—I say, would either party keep from fearing greatly if they saw God? Surely it is quite a truism to say that any creature would fear. But why would he fear? would it be merely because he saw God, or because he knew that God was present? If he shut his eyes, he would still fear, for his eyes had conveyed to him this solemn truth; to *have* seen would be enough. But if so, does it not follow at once, that, if men do not fear, it is because they do not act, as they would act if they saw Him, that is, they do not feel that He is present? Is it not quite certain that men would not use Almighty God's name so freely, if they thought He was really in hearing, nay, close beside them when they spoke? And so of those other instances of want of Godly fear, which I mentioned, they one and all come from deadness to the presence of God. If a man believes Him present, he will shrink from addressing Him familiarly, or using before Him unreal words, or peremptorily and on his own judgment deciding what God's will is, or claiming His confidence, or addressing Him in a familiar posture of body. I say, take the man who is most confident that he has nothing to fear from the

presence of God, and that Almighty God is at peace with him, and place him actually before the throne of God; and would he have no misgivings? and will he dare to say that those misgivings are a weakness, a mere irrational perturbation, which he ought not to feel?

This will be seen more clearly, by considering how differently we feel towards and speak of our friends as present or absent. Their presence is a check upon us; it acts as an external law, compelling us to do or not do what we should not do, or should do otherwise, but for it. This is just what most men lack in their religion at present,—such an external restraint arising from the consciousness of God's presence. Consider, I say, how differently we speak of a friend, however intimate, when present or absent; consider how we feel, should it so happen that we had begun to speak of him as if he were not present, on finding suddenly that he is; and that though we are conscious of nothing but what is loving and open towards him. There is a tone of voice and a manner in speaking about persons absent, which we should consider disrespectful, or at least inconsiderate, if they were present. When that is the case, we are ever thinking more or less, even though unconsciously to ourselves, how they will take what we say, how it will affect them, what they will say to us or think of us in turn. When a person is absent, we are tempted perhaps confidently to say what his opinion is on certain points;—but should he be present, we qualify our words; we hardly like to speak at all, from the vivid consciousness that we may be wrong, and that he is present to tell us so. We are very cautious of pronouncing what his feelings are on the matter in hand, or how he is disposed towards ourselves; and in all things we observe a deference and delicacy in our conduct towards him. Now if we feel this towards our fellows, what should we feel in the presence of an Angel? and if so, what in the presence of the all-knowing, all-searching Judge of men? What is respect and consideration in the case of our fellows, becomes godly fear as regards Almighty God; and they who do not fear Him, in one word, do not believe that He sees and hears them. If they did, they would cease to boast so confidently of His favourable thoughts of them, to foretell His dealings, to pronounce upon His revelations, to make free with His Name, and to address Him familiarly.

Now, in what has been said, no account has been taken, as I have already observed, of our being sinners, a corrupt, polluted race at the best, while He is the All-holy God, which must surely increase our fear and awe greatly, and not at all the less because we have been so wonderfully redeemed. Nor, again, has account been taken of another point, on which I will add two or three words.

There is a peculiar feeling with which we regard the dead. What does this arise from? that he is absent? no; for we do not feel the same towards one who is merely distant: though he be at the other end of the earth. Is it because in this life we shall never see him again? no, surely not; because we may be perfectly certain we shall never see him when he goes abroad, we may know he is to die abroad, and perhaps he does die abroad; but will any one say, that when the news of his death comes, our feeling when we think of him is not quite changed? Surely it is the passing into another state, which impresses itself upon us, and makes us speak of him as we do,—I mean, with a sort of awe. We cannot tell what he is now,—what his relations to us,—what he knows of us. We do not understand him,—we do not see him. He is passed into the land “that is very far off;” but it is not at all certain that he has not some mysterious hold over us. Thus his not being seen with our bodily eyes, while perchance he is present, makes the thought of him more awful. Apply this to the subject before us, and you will perceive that there is a sense, and a true sense, in which the *invisible* presence of God is more awful and overpowering than if we saw it. And so again, the presence of Christ, now that it is invisible, brings with it a host of high and mysterious feelings, such as nothing else can inspire. The thought of our Saviour, absent, yet present, is like that of a friend taken from us, but, as it were, in dream returned to us, though in this case not in dream, but in reality and truth. When He was going away He said to His disciples, “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice.” Yet He had at another time said, “The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” See what an apparent contradiction, such as attends the putting any high feeling into human language; they were to joy because Christ was come, and yet weep because He was away; that is, to have a feeling so refined, so strange and new, that nothing could be said of it, but that it combined in one all that was sweet and soothing in contrary human feelings, as commonly experienced. As some precious fruits of the earth are said to taste like all others at once, not as not being really distinct from all others, but as being thus best described, when we would come as near the truth as we can, so the state of mind, which they are in, who believe that the Son of God is here, yet away,—is at the right hand of God, yet in His very flesh and blood among us,—is present, though invisible,—is one of both joy and pain, or rather one far above either; a feeling of awe, wonder, and praise, which cannot be more suitably expressed than by the Scripture word *fear*, or by holy Job’s words, though he spoke in grief, and not as being possessed of a blessing.

“Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider, I am afraid of Him.”*

To conclude. Enough has been said now to show that godly fear must be a duty, if to live as in God’s sight is a duty,—must be a privilege of the Gospel, if the spiritual sight of “the King in His beauty” be one of its privileges. Fear follows from faith necessarily, as would be plain, even though there were not a text in the Bible saying so. But in fact, as it is scarcely needful to say, Scripture abounds in precepts to fear God. Such are the words of the Wise Man: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Such again is the third commandment, in which we are solemnly bidden not to take God’s Name in vain. Such the declaration of the prophet Habakkuk, who beginning by declaring “The just shall live by his faith,” ends by saying, “The Lord is in His Holy Temple; let the whole earth keep silence before Him.” Such is St. Paul’s, who, in like manner, after having discoursed at length upon faith as “the realizing of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” adds: “Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” Such St. Luke’s account of the Church militant on earth, that “walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost,” it was “multiplied.” Such St. John’s account of the Church triumphant in heaven, “Who shall not fear Thee,” they say, “O Lord, and glorify Thy Name; for Thou only art Holy?” Such the feeling recorded of the three Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration, who, when they heard God’s voice, “fell on their face, and were sore afraid.”† And now, if this be so, can any thing be clearer than that the *want* of fear is nothing else but *want* of faith, and that in consequence we in this age are approaching in religious temper that evil day of which it is said, “When the Son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?”‡ Is it wonderful that we have no fear in our words and mutual intercourse when we exercise no *acts* of faith? What, you will ask, are acts of faith? Such as these,—to come often to prayer, is an act of faith; to kneel down instead of sitting, is an act of faith; to strive to attend to your prayers, is an act of faith; to behave in God’s House otherwise than you would in a common room, is an act of faith;

* Job xxiii. 8, 9, 15.

† Prov. i. 7. Hab. ii. 4. 20. Heb. xii. 28. Acts ix. 31. Rev. xv. 4. Matt. xvii. 6.

‡ Luke xviii. 8.

to come to it on week-days as well as Sundays, is an act of faith ; to come often to the most Holy Sacrament, is an act of faith ; and to be still and reverent during that sacred service, is an act of faith. These are all acts of faith, because they are all acts such as we should perform, if we saw and heard Him who *is* present, though with our bodily eyes we see and hear Him *not*. But, “blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed ;” for, be sure, if we thus act, we shall, through God’s grace, be gradually endued with the spirit of His holy fear. We shall in time, in our mode of talking and acting, in our religious services and our daily conduct, manifest, not with constraint and effort, but spontaneously and naturally, that we fear Him while we love Him.

SERMON III.

UNREAL WORDS .

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty ; thou shalt behold the land that is very far off.

THE Prophet tells us, that under the Gospel covenant God’s servant will have the privilege of seeing those heavenly sights which were but shadowed out in the Law. Before Christ came was the time of shadows ; but when He came, He brought truth as well as grace ; and as He who is the Truth has come to us, so does He in return require that we should be true and sincere in all our dealings with Him. To be true and sincere is really to see with our minds those great wonders which He has wrought in order that we might see them. When God opened the eyes of the ass on which Balaam rode, she saw the Angel and acted upon the sight. When He opened the eyes of the young man, Elisha’s servant, he too saw the chariots and horses of fire, and took comfort. And in like manner, Christians are now under the protection of a Divine Presence, and that more wonderful than any which

was vouchsafed of old time. God revealed Himself visibly to Jacob, to Job, to Moses, to Joshua, and to Isaiah; to us He reveals Himself not visibly, but more wonderfully and truly; not without the co-operation of our own will, but upon our faith, and for that very reason more truly; for faith is the special means of gaining spiritual blessings. Hence St. Paul prays for the Ephesians "that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith," and that "the eyes of their understanding may be enlightened." And St. John declares that "the Son of God hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true: and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ."*

We are no longer, then, in the region of shadows: we have the true Saviour set before us, the true reward, and the true means of spiritual renewal. We know the true state of the soul by nature and by grace, the evil of sin, the consequences of sinning, the way of pleasing God, and the motives to act upon. God has revealed Himself clearly to us; He has "destroyed the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." "The darkness is past, and the True Light now shineth."† And therefore, I say, He calls upon us in turn to "walk in the light as He is in the light." The Pharisees might have this excuse in their hypocrisy, that the plain truth had not been revealed to them; we have not even this poor reason for insincerity. We have no opportunity of mistaking one thing for another: the promise is expressly made to us, that "our teachers shall not be removed into a corner any more, but our eyes shall see our teachers;" that "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim;" that everything shall be called by its right name; that "the vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful;"‡ in a word, as the text speaks, that "our eyes shall see the King in His beauty; we shall behold the land that is very far off." Our professions, our creed, our prayers, our dealings, our conversation, our arguments, our teaching, must henceforth be sincere, or, to use an expressive word, must be *real*. What St. Paul says of himself and his fellow-labourers, that they were true because Christ is true, applies to all Christians: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to youwards. . . . The thing that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay? But, as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay.

* Ephes. iii. 17; i. 18. 1 John v. 20.

† Isa. xxv. 7. 1 John ii. 8.

‡ Isa. xxx. 20; xxxii. 3, 5.

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ . . . was not yea and nay, but in Him was yea. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us.*

And yet it need scarcely be said, nothing is so rare as honesty and singleness of mind ; so much so, that a person who is really honest, is already perfect. Insincerity was an evil which sprang up within the Church from the first ; Ananias and Simon were not open opposers of the Apostles, but false brethren. And, as foreseeing what was to be, our Saviour is remarkable in His ministry for nothing more than the earnestness of the dissuasives which He addressed to those who came to Him, of taking up religion lightly, or of making promises which they were likely to break.

Thus He, "the True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God,"† said to the young Ruler, who lightly called him "Good Master," "Why callest thou Me good?" as bidding him weigh his words; and then abruptly told him, "One thing thou lackest." When a certain man professed that he would follow Him whithersoever He went, He did not respond to him, but said, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." When St. Peter said, with all his heart, in the name of himself and brethren, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," He answered pointedly, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" as if He said, "Answer for thyself." When the two Apostles professed their desire to cast their lot with Him, He asked whether they could "drink of His cup and be baptized with His baptism." And when "there went great multitudes with Him," He turned and said, that unless a man hated relations, friends, and self, He could not be His disciple. And then He proceeded to warn all men to "count the cost" ere they followed Him. Such is the merciful severity with which He repels us, that He may gain us more truly. And what He thinks of those who, after coming to Him, relapse into a hollow and hypocritical profession, we learn from His language towards the Laodiceans: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will cast thee out of my mouth."‡

We have a striking instance of the same conduct on the part of that ancient Saint who prefigured our Lord in name and office, Joshua, the

* 2 Cor. i. 12—20.

† John i. 9. Rev. 3. 14.

‡ Mark x. 17—21. Matt. viii. 20. John vi. 68—70. Matt. xx. 22. Luke xiv. 25—28. Rev. iii. 15, 16.

captain of the chosen people in entering Canaan. When they had at length taken possession of that land which Moses and their fathers had seen "very far off," they said to him, "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, and serve other gods. We will . . . serve the Lord, for He is our God." He made answer, "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins."* Not as if he would hinder them from obeying, but to sober them in professing. How does his answer remind us of St. Paul's still more awful words, about the impossibility of renewal after utterly falling away!

And what is said of profession of *discipleship* applies undoubtedly in its degree to *all* profession. To make professions is to play with edge tools, unless we attend to what we are saying. Words have a meaning, whether we mean that meaning or not; and they are imputed to us in their real meaning, when our not meaning it is our own fault. He who takes God's name in vain is not counted guiltless because he means nothing by it,—he cannot frame a language for himself; and they who make professions, of whatever kind, are heard in the sense of those professions, and are not excused because they themselves attach no sense to them. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."†

Now this consideration needs especially to be pressed upon Christians at this day; for this is especially a day of professions. You will answer in my own words, that all ages have been ages of profession. So they have been, in one way or other, but this day in its own especial sense:—because this is especially a day of individual profession. This is a day in which there is (rightly or wrongly) so much of private judgment, so much of separation and difference, so much of preaching and teaching, so much of authorship, that it involves individual profession, responsibility, and recompense in a way peculiarly its own. It will not then be out of place if, in connection with the text, we consider some of the many ways in which persons, whether in this age or in another, make unreal professions, or seeing see not, and hearing hear not, and speak without mastering, or trying to master, their words. This I will attempt to do at some length, and in matters of detail, which are not the less important because they are minute.

Of course it is very common in all matters, not only in religion, to speak in an unreal way; viz., when we speak on a subject with which our minds are not familiar. If you were to hear a person who knew nothing about military matters, giving directions how soldiers on service

should conduct themselves, or how their food and lodging, or their marching was to be duly arranged, you would be sure that his mistakes would be such as to excite the ridicule and contempt of men experienced in warfare. If a foreigner were to come to one of our cities, and without hesitation offer plans for the supply of our markets, or the management of our police, it is so certain that he would expose himself, that the very attempt would argue a great want of good sense and modesty. We should feel that he did not understand us, and that when he spoke about us, he would be using words without meaning. If a dim-sighted man were to attempt to decide questions of proportion and colour, or a man without ear to judge of musical compositions, we should feel that he spoke on and from general principles, on fancy, or by deduction and argument, not from a real apprehension of the matters which he discussed. His remarks would be theoretical and unreal.

This unsubstantial way of speaking is instanced in the case of persons who fall into any new company, among strange faces and amid novel occurrences. They sometimes form amiable judgments of men and things, sometimes the reverse,—but whichever their judgments be, they are to those who know the men and the things strangely unreal and distorted. They feel reverence where they should not; they discern slights where none were intended; they discover meaning in events which have none; they fancy motives; they misinterpret manner; they mistake character; and they form generalizations and combinations which exist only in their own minds.

Again, persons who have not attended to the subject of morals, or to politics, or to matters ecclesiastical, or to theology, do not know the relative value of questions which they meet with in one or other of these departments. They do not understand the difference between one point and another. The one and the other are the same to them. They look at them as infants gaze at the objects which meet their eyes, in a vague unapprehensive way, as if not knowing whether a thing is a hundred miles off or close at hand, whether great or small, hard or soft. They have no means of judging, no standard to measure by,—and they give judgment at random, saying yea or nay on very deep questions, according as their fancy is struck at the moment, or as some clever or specious argument happens to come across them. Consequently they are inconsistent; say one thing one day, another the next;—and if they must act, act in the dark; or if they can help acting, do not act; or if they act freely, act from some other reason, not avowed. All this is to be unreal.

Again, there cannot be a more apposite specimen of unreality than the way in which judgments are commonly formed upon important

questions by the mass of the community. Opinions are continually given in the world on matters, about which they who offer them are as little qualified to judge as blind men about colours, and that because they have never exercised their minds upon the points in question. This is a day in which all men are obliged to have an opinion on all questions political, social and religious, because they have in some way or other an influence upon the decision ; yet the multitude are for the most part absolutely without capacity to take their part in it. In saying this, I am far from meaning that this need be so,—I am far from denying that there is such a thing as plain good sense, or (what is better) religious sense, which will see its way through very intricate matters, or that this is in fact sometimes exerted in the community at large on certain great questions ; but at the same time this practical sense is so far from being exerted on the vast mass of questions which in this day come before the public, that (as all persons who attempt to gain the influence of the people on their side know well) their opinions must be purchased by interesting their prejudices or fears in their favour ;—not by presenting a question in its real and true substance, but by adroitly colouring it, or selecting out of it some particular point which may be exaggerated, and dressed up, and be made the means of working on popular feelings. And thus government and the art of government becomes, as much as popular religion, hollow and unsound.

And hence it is that the popular voice is so changeable. One man or measure is the idol of the people to-day, another to-morrow. They have never got beyond accepting shadows for things.

What is instanced in the mass instanced also in various ways in the individuals, and in points of detail. For instance, men are set perhaps on being eloquent speakers. They use great words and imitate the sentences of others ; and they fancy that those whom they imitate had as little meaning as themselves, or they perhaps contrive to think that they themselves have a meaning adequate to their words.

Another sort of unreality, or voluntary profession of what is above us, is instanced in the conduct of those who suddenly come into power or place. They affect a manner such as they think the office requires, but what is beyond them, and therefore unbecoming. They wish to act with dignity, and they cease to be themselves.

And so again, to take a different case, many men, when they come near persons in distress and wish to show sympathy, often condole in a very unreal way. I am not altogether laying this to their fault ; for it is very difficult to know what to do, when on the one hand we cannot realize to ourselves the sorrow, yet withal wish to be kind to those who feel it. A tone of grief seems necessary, yet (if so be) cannot

under our circumstances be genuine. Yet even here surely there is a true way, if we could find it, by which pretence may be avoided, and yet respect and consideration shown.

And in like manner as regards religious emotions. Persons are aware from the mere force of the doctrines of which the Gospel consists, that they ought to be variously affected, and deeply and intensely too, in consequence of them. The doctrines of original and actual sin, of Christ's Divinity and Atonement, and of Holy Baptism, are so vast that no one can realize them without very complicated and profound feelings. Natural reason tells a man this, and that if he simply and genuinely believes them, he must have these feelings; and he professes to believe these doctrines absolutely, and therefore he professes the correspondent feelings. But in truth he perhaps does *not* really believe them absolutely, because such absolute belief is the work of long time, and therefore his profession of feeling outruns the real inward existence of feeling, or he becomes unreal. Let us never lose sight of two truths,—that we ought to have our hearts penetrated with the love of Christ and full of self-renunciation; but that if they be not, professing that they are does not make them so.

Again, to take a more serious instance of the same fault, some persons pray, not as sinners addressing their God, not as the publican smiting on his breast, and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," but in such a way as they conceive to be becoming *under* circumstances like these, in a way becoming such a contrast. They are conscious and reflect on what they are about, and instead of actually approaching (as it were) the mercy-seat, they are filled with the thought that God is great, and man His creature, God on high and man on earth, and that they are engaged in a high and solemn service, and that they ought to rise up to its sublime and momentous character.

Another still more common form of the same fault, yet without any definite pretence or effort, is the mode in which people speak of the shortness and vanity of life, the certainty of death, and the joys of heaven. They have common-places in their mouths, which they bring forth upon occasions for the good of others, or to console them, or as a proper and becoming attention towards them. Thus they speak to clergymen in a professedly serious way, making remarks true and sound, and in themselves deep, yet unmeaning in their mouths; or they give advice to children or young men; or perhaps in low spirits or sickness they are led to speak in a religious strain as if spontaneously. Or when they fall into sin, they speak of man being frail, of the deceitfulness of the human heart, of God's mercy, and so on;—all these great words, heaven, hell, judgment, mercy, repentance,

works, the world that now is, the world to come, being little more than "lifeless sounds, whether of pipe or harp," in their mouths and ears, as the "very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument,"—as the proprieties of conversation, or the civilities of good breeding.

I am speaking of the conduct of the world at large, called Christian ; but what has been said applies, and necessarily, to the case of a number of well-disposed or even religious men. I mean, that before men come to know the realities of human life, it is not wonderful that their view of religion should be unreal. Young people who have never known sorrow or anxiety, or the sacrifices which conscientiousness involves, want commonly that depth and seriousness of character, which sorrow only and anxiety and self-sacrifice can give. I do not notice this as a fault, but as a plain fact, which may often be seen, and which it is well to bear in mind. This is the legitimate use of this world, to make us seek for another. It does its part when it repels us and disgusts us and drives us elsewhere. Experience of it gives experience of that which is its antidote, in the case of religious minds ; and we become real in our view of what is spiritual by the contact of things temporal and earthly. And much more are men unreal when they have some secret motive urging them a different way from religion, and their professions therefore are forced into an unnatural course in order to subserve their secret motive. When men do not like the conclusions to which their principles lead, or the precepts which Scripture contains, they are not wanting in ingenuity to blunt their force. They can frame some theory, or dress up certain objections, to defend themselves withal ; a theory or objections, which it is difficult to refute perhaps, but which any rightly ordered mind, nay, any common bystander, perceives to be unnatural and insincere.

What has been here noticed of individuals, takes place even in the case of whole Churches, at times when love has waxed cold and faith failed. The whole system of the Church, its discipline and ritual, are all in their origin the spontaneous and exuberant fruit of the real principle of spiritual religion in the hearts of its members. The invisible Church has developed itself into the Church visible, and its outward rites and forms are nourished and animated by the living power which dwells within it. Thus every part of it is real, down to the minutest details. But when the seductions of the world and the lusts of the flesh have eaten out this divine inward life, what is the outward Church but a hollowness and a mockery, like the whited sepulchres of which our Lord speaks, a memorial of what was and is not ? and though we trust that the Church is no where thus utterly deserted by the Spirit of

truth, at least according to God's ordinary providences, yet may we not say that in proportion as it approaches to this deadness, the grace of its ordinances, though not forfeited, at least flows in but a scanty or uncertain stream?

And lastly, if this unreality may steal over the Church itself, which is in its very essence a practical institution, much more is it found in the philosophies and literature of men. Literature is almost in its essence unreal; for it is the exhibition of thought disjoined from practice. Its very home is supposed to be ease and retirement, and when it does more than speak or write, it is accused of transgressing its bounds. This indeed constitutes what is considered its true dignity and honour, viz. its abstraction from the actual affairs of life; its security from the world's currents and vicissitudes; its saying without doing. A man of literature is considered to preserve his dignity by doing nothing, and when he proceeds forward into action, he is thought to lose his position as if he were degrading his calling by enthusiasm, and becoming a politician or partisan. Hence mere literary men are able to say strong things against the opinions of their age, whether religious or political, without offence; because no one thinks they mean any thing by them. They are not expected to go forward to act upon them, and mere words hurt no one.

Such are some of the more common or more extended specimens of profession without action, or of speaking without really seeing and feeling. In instancing which, let it be observed, I do not mean to say that such profession, as has been described, is always culpable and wrong; indeed I have implied the contrary throughout. It is often a misfortune. It takes a long time really to feel and understand things as they are; we learn to do so only gradually. Profession beyond our feelings is only a fault when we might help it;—when either we speak when we need not speak, or do not feel when we might have felt. Hard insensible hearts, ready and thoughtless talkers, these are they whose unreality, as I have termed it, is a sin; it is the sin of every one of us, in proportion as our hearts are cold, or our tongues excessive.

But the mere fact of our saying more than we feel, is not necessarily sinful. St. Peter did not rise up to the full meaning of his confession, "Thou art the Christ," yet he was pronounced blessed. St. James and St. John said, "We are able," without clear apprehension, yet without offence. We ever promise things greater than we master, and we wait on God to enable us to perform them. Our promising involves a prayer for light and strength. And so again, we all say the Creed, but who

comprehends it fully? All we can hope is, that we are in the way to understand it; that we partly understand it; that we desire, pray, and strive to understand it more and more. Our Creed becomes a sort of prayer. Persons are culpably unreal in their way of speaking, not when they say more than they feel, but when they say things different from what they feel. A miser praising alms-giving, or a coward giving rules for courage, is unreal; but it is not unreal for the less to discourse about the greater for the liberal to descant upon munificence, or the generous to praise the noble minded, or the self-denying to use the language of the austere, or the confessor to exhort to martyrdom.

What I have been saying comes to this;—be in earnest, and you will speak of religion where, and when, and how you should; aim at things, and your words will be right without aiming. There are ten thousand ways of looking at this world, but only one right one. The man of pleasure has his way, the man of gain his, and the man of intellect his. Poor men and rich men, governors and governed, prosperous and discontented, learned and unlearned, each has his own way of looking at the things which come before him, and each has a wrong way. There is but one right way; it is the way in which God looks at the world. Aim at looking at it in God's way. Aim at seeing things as God sees them. Aim at forming judgments about persons, events, ranks, fortunes, changes, objects, such as God forms. Aim at looking at this life as God looks at it. Aim at looking at the life to come, and the world unseen, as God does. Aim at "seeing the King in His beauty. All things that we see are but shadows to us and delusions, unless we enter into what they really mean.

It is not an easy thing to learn that new language which Christ has brought us. He has interpreted all things for us in a new way; He has brought as a religion which sheds a new light on all that happens. Try to learn this language. Do not get it by rote, or speak it as a thing of course. Try to understand what you say. Time is short, eternity is long; God is great, man is weak; he stands between heaven and hell; Christ is his Saviour. Christ has suffered for him. The Holy Ghost sanctifies him; repentance purifies him, faith justifies, works save. These are solemn truths, which need not be actually spoken, except in the way of creed or of teaching; but which must be laid up in the heart. That a thing is true, is no reason that it should be said, but that it should be done; that it should be acted upon; that it should be made our own inwardly.

Let us avoid talking, of whatever kind; whether mere empty talking, or censorious talking, or idle profession, or descanting upon gospel doctrines, or the affectation of philosophy, or the pretence of eloquence.

Let us guard against frivolity, love of display, love of being talked about, love of singularity, love of seeming original. Let us aim at meaning what we say, and saying what we mean; let us aim at knowing when we understand a truth, and when we do not. When we do not, let us take it on faith, and let us profess to do so. Let us receive the truth in reverence, and pray God to give us good will, and divine light, and spiritual strength, that it may bear fruit within us.

SERMON IV.

SHRINKING FROM CHRIST'S COMING.

ISAIAH xxxiii. 17.

Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.

BEFORE Christ came, the faithful remnant of Israel was consoled with the promise that "their eyes should see" Him, who was to be their "salvation." "Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Yet it is observable that the prophecy, though cheering and encouraging, had with it something of an awful character too. First, it was said, "The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His Temple, even the messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in." Yet it is soon added, "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap."*

The same mixture of fear with comfort is found in the Disciples after His Resurrection. The women departed from the sepulchre "with fear and great joy." They "trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid." The Apostles "were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." "They believed not for joy, and wondered." And our Lord said to them,

* Mal. iv. 2; iii. 1, 2.

"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" On another occasion, "None of the disciples durst ask Him, "Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord."* It might be from slowness to believe, or from misconception, or from the mere perplexity of amazement, but so it was; they exulted and they were awed.

Still more remarkable is the account of our Lord's appearance to St. John in the book of Revelations; more remarkable because St. John had no doubt of perplexity; Christ had ascended; the Apostle had received the gift of the Holy Ghost; yet he "fell at His feet as dead."

This reflection leads us on to a parallel thought concerning the state and prospects of all Christians in every age. We too are looking out for Christ's coming,—we are bid look-out,—we are bid pray for it; and yet it is to be a time of judgment. It is to be the deliverance of all Saints from sin and sorrow for ever;—yet they, every one of them, must undergo an awful trial. How then can any one look forward to it with joy, not knowing (for no one knows) the certainty of his own salvation? And the difficulty is increased when we come to pray for it,—to pray for its coming soon; how can we pray that Christ would come, that the day of judgment would hasten, that His kingdom would come, that His kingdom may be at once,—may come on us this day or to-morrow, when by so coming He would be shortening the time of our present life, and cut off those precious years given us for conversion, amendment, repentance, and sanctification? Is there not an inconsistency in professing to wish our Judge already come, when we do not feel ourselves ready for Him? In what sense can we really and heartily pray that He would cut short the time, when our consciences tell us that, even were our life longest, we should have much to do in a few years?

I do not deny that there is some difficulty in the question, but surely not more so than there is on every side of us in religious matters. Religion has (as it were) its very life, in what are paradoxes and contradictions in the eye of reason. It is a seeming inconsistency how we can pray for Christ's coming, yet wish time to "work out our salvation," and "make our calling and election sure." It was a seeming contradiction, how good men were to desire His first coming, yet be unable to abide it; how the Apostles feared, yet rejoiced after His resurrection. And so it is a paradox how the Christian should in all things be sorrowful yet always rejoicing, and dying yet living, and having nothing yet possessing all things. Such seeming contradictions arise from the want of depth in our minds to master the whole truth. We have not eyes

* Matt. xxviii. 8. Mark xvi. 8. Luke xxiv. 37, 38. John xxi. 12.

keen enough to follow out the lines of God's providence and will, which meet at length, though at first sight they seem parallel.

I will now try to explain how these opposite duties of fearing yet praying to have the sight of Christ are not necessarily inconsistent with each other. Why we should fear it, is not strange. Surely when a man gets himself steadily to contemplate a state of things beyond this life, he is in the way to be overpowered by the thoughts which throng upon him. How dreadful to the imagination is every scene of that unknown hereafter? This life indeed is full of dangers and pains, but we know what they are like; we do not know what shall be in the world to come. "Lord, whither goest Thou?" said the Apostles; "we know not whither Thou goest." Supposing a man told that he should suddenly be carried off to some unknown globe in the heavens,—this is the kind of trouble in its least fearful shape, which the future presents, when dwelt upon. And still more trying is the peculiar prospect which presents itself of Christ's coming in judgment. What a prospect, to be judged for all our doings by an unerring Judge! Try to trace back the history of your life in memory, and fancy every part of it confessed by you in words, put into words before some intimate friend, how great would be your shame! but how gladly would you in that day resign yourself to a disclosure to a fellow-sinner, how gladly a disclosure to a world of sinners, compared with the presence of an All-holy, All-seeing Creator with His eyes upon you, "beholding you," as the gospel speaks of Him in the days of His flesh,—and one deed of evil after another told forth, while all your best actions and best qualities fade away and become as discoloured and unsightly as if there were nothing good in them; and you the while uncertain how the decision shall be. I do not presume to say that all this will happen in detail; but this is what is meant by a judgment in the earthly sense of the word, and that awful trial is surely not called a judgment for nothing, but that we may gain some ideas from it. Think of all this, and you will not deny that the thought of standing before Christ is enough to make us tremble. And yet His presence is held out to us by Himself as the greatest of goods; all Christians are bound to pray for it, to pray for its hastening; to pray that we may speedily look on Him whom none can see "without holiness," none but "the pure in heart;"—and now the question is, How can we pray for it with sincerity?

1. Now first, though we could not at all reconcile our feelings about ourselves with the command given us, still it is our duty to obey the latter on faith. If Abraham could lift up his knife to slay his son, we may well so far subdue our fears as to pray for what nevertheless is terrible. Job said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Under

all circumstances surely, we may calmly resign ourselves into His hands. Can we suppose that He would deceive us? deal unkindly or hardly with us? Can He make use of us, if I may so say, against ourselves? Let us not so think of the most merciful Lord. Let us do what He bids, and leave the rest to Him. Thus, I say, we might reason with ourselves, if nothing else could be said.

2. But next, I observe, that when we pray for the coming of Christ, we do but pray in the Church's words, that He would "*accomplish the number of His elect and would hasten His kingdom.*" That is, we do not pray that He would cut short the world, but, so to express myself, that He would make time go quicker, and the wheels of His chariot speed on. Before He comes, a certain space must be gone over; all the Saints must be gathered in; and each Saint must be matured. Not a grain must fall to the ground; not an ear of corn must lose its due rain and sunshine. All we pray is, that He would please to crowd all this into a short space of time; that He would "finish the work and cut it short in righteousness," and "make a short work upon the earth;" that He would accomplish,—nor curtail, but fulfil,—the circle of his Saints, and hasten the age to come without disordering this. Indeed it cannot be otherwise. All God's works are in place and season; they are all complete. As, in nature, the structure of its minutest portions is wrought out to perfection, and an insect is as wonderful as Leviathan; so, when in His providence He seems to hurry, He still keeps time, and moves upon the deep harmonies of truth and love. When then we pray that He would come, we pray also that we may be ready; that all things may converge and meet in Him; that He may draw us while He draws near us, and make us the holier the closer He comes. We pray that we may not fear that which at present we justly do fear; "that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."* He can condense into an hour a life of trial. He who frames the worlds in a moment, and creates generations by the breath of His mouth, and melts, and hardens, and deluges, and dries up the solid rocks in a day, and makes bones to live, grow, and die, and buries them in the earth, and changes them into stone, apart from time and at His mere will, more wondrously can He deal with the world of spirits, who are never subject to the accidents of matter. He can by one keen pang of agony punish the earthly soul, or by one temptation justify it, or by one vision glorify it. Adam fell in a moment; Abraham was justified when he seized the knife; Moses lost Canaan for a word; David said, "I have sinned," and was for-

* 1 John ii. 28.

given ; Solomon gained wisdom in a dream ; Peter made one confession, and received the keys ; our Lord baffled Satan in three sentences ; He redeemed us in the course of a day ; He regenerates us by a form of words. We know not how "fearfully and wonderfully" our souls "are made." To men in sleep, in drowning, or in excitement, moments are as years. They suddenly become other men, nature or grace dispensing with time.

3. But again, you say, How can I pray to see Christ, who am so unclean ? You say well that you are unclean. But in what time do you propose to become otherwise ? Do you expect in this life ever to be clean ? Yes, in one sense, by the presence of the Holy Ghost within you ; but that presence we trust you have now. But if by "clean," you mean free from that infection of nature, the least drop of which is sufficient to dishonour all your services, clean you never will be till you have paid the debt of sin, and lose that body which Adam has begotten. Be sure that the longer you live, and the holier you become, you will only perceive that misery more clearly. The less of it you have, the more it will oppress you ; its full draught does but stun and stupify you ; as you come to yourself, your misery begins. The more your soul becomes one with Him who deigns to dwell within it, the more it sees with His eyes. You dare not pray for His presence now ;—would pray for it had you lived Methuselah's years ? I trow not. You will never be good enough to desire it ; no one in the whole Church prays for it except on conditions implied. To the end of the longest life you are still a beginner. What Christ asks of you is not sinlessness, but diligence. Had you lived ten times your present age, ten times more service would be required of you. Every day you live longer, more will be required. If He were to come to-day, you would be judged up to to-day. Did He come to-morrow, you would be judged up to to-morrow. Were the time put off a year, you will have a year more to answer for. You cannot elude your destiny, you cannot get rid of your talent ; you are to answer for your opportunities, whatever they may be, not more nor less. You cannot be profitable to Him even with the longest life, you can show faith and love in an hour. True it is, if you have turned from Him, and served sin, and in proportion as you have done this, you have a great work before you,—to undo what you have done. If you have given years to Satan, you have a double duty, to repent as well as to work ; but even then you may pray without dread ; for in praying for His presence you still are praying, as I have said, to be ready for it.

4. But once more. You ask, how you can make up your mind to stand before your Lord and God ; I ask in turn, how do you bring

yourself to come before Him now day by day?—for what is this but meeting Him? Consider what it is you mean by praying, and you will see that, at that very time that you are asking for the coming of His kingdom, you are anticipating that coming, and accomplishing the thing you fear. When you pray, you come into His presence. Now reflect on yourself, what your feelings are in coming. They are these: you seem to say,—I am in myself nothing but a sinner, a man of unclean lips and earthly heart. I am not worthy to enter into His presence. I am not worthy of the least of all His mercies. I know he is All-holy, yet I come before him; I place myself under His pure and piercing eyes, which look me through and through, and discern every trace and every motion of evil within me. Why do I do so? First of all, for this reason. To whom should I go? What can I do better? Who is there in the whole world that can help me? Who that will care for me or pity me, or have any kind of thought of me, if I cannot obtain it of Him? I know He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; but I know again that He is All-merciful, and that He so sincerely desires my salvation that He has died for me. Therefore, though I am in a great strait, I will rather fall into His hands, than into those of any creature. True it is I could find creatures more like myself, imperfect or sinful; it might seem better to betake myself to some of these who have power with God, and to beseech them to interest themselves for me. But no; somehow I cannot content myself with this;—no, terrible as it is, I had rather go to God alone. I have an instinct within me which leads me to rise and go to my Father, to name the Name of His well-beloved Son, and having named it, to place myself unreservedly in His hands, saying, “If Thou, Lord, will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is forgiveness with Thee.”—This is the feeling in which we come to confess our sins, and to pray to God for pardon and grace day by day; and observe, it is the very feeling in which we must prepare to meet Him when He comes visibly. Why, even children of this world can meet a judicial process and a violent death with firmness. I do not say that we must have aught of their pride or their self-trusting tranquillity. And yet there is a certain composure and dignity which become us who are born of immortal seed when we come before our Father. If indeed we have habitually lived to the world, then truly it is natural we should attempt to fly from Him whom we have pierced. Then may we well call on the mountains to fall on us, and on the hills to cover us. But if we have lived, however imperfectly, yet habitually, in His fear, if we trust that His Spirit is in us, then we need not be ashamed before Him. We shall then come before Him, as now we

come to pray—with profound abasement, with awe, with self-renunciation, still as relying upon the Spirit which He has given us, with our faculties about us, with a collected and determined mind, and with hope. He who cannot pray for Christ's coming, ought not in consistency to pray at all.

I have spoken of coming to God in prayer generally ; but if this is awful, much more is coming to Him in the Sacrament of Holy Communion ; for this is in very form an anticipation of His coming, a near presence of Him in earnest of it. And a number of men feel it to be so ; for, for one reason or another, they never come before Him in that most Holy Ordinance, and so deprive themselves of the highest of blessings here below. Still their feeling is much the same as theirs would be, who from fear of His coming, did not dare look out for it. They indeed who are in the religious practice of communicating, understand well enough how it is possible to feel afraid and yet to come. Surely it is, and the case is the same as regards the future day of Christ. You must tremble and yet pray for it. We have all of us experienced enough even of this life, to know that the same seasons are often most joyful and also most painful. Instances of this must suggest themselves to all men. Consider the loss of friends, and say whether joy and grief, triumph and humiliation, are not strangely mingled, yet both really preserved. The joy does not change the grief, nor the grief the joy, into some third feeling ; they are incommunicable with each other, both remain, both affect us. Or consider the mingled feelings with which a son obtains forgiveness of a father,—the soothing thought that all displeasure is at an end, the veneration and love, and all the undescribable emotions, most pleasurable, which cannot be put into words,—yet his bitterness against himself. Such is the temper in which we desire to come to the Lord's table ; such in which we must pray for His coming ; such in which His elect will stand before Him when He comes.

5. Lastly, let me say more distinctly what I have already alluded to, that in that solemn hour we shall have, if we be His, the inward support of His Spirit too, carrying us on towards Him, and “witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God.” God is mysteriously threefold ; and while He remains in the highest heaven, He comes to judge the world ;—and while He judges the world, He is in us also, bearing us up and going forth in us to meet Himself. God the Son is without, but God the Spirit is within,—and when the Son asks, the Spirit will answer. That Spirit is vouchsafed to us here ; and if we yield ourselves to His gracious influences, so that He draws up our thoughts and wills to heavenly things, and becomes one with us, He

will assuredly be still in us and give us confidence at the Day of judgment. He will be with us, and strengthen us; and how great His strength is, what mind of man can conceive? Gifted with that supernatural strength, we may be able to lift up our eyes to our Judge when He looks on us, and look on Him in turn, though with deep awe, yet without confusion of face, as if in the consciousness of innocence.

That hour must come at length upon every one of us. When it comes, may the countenance of the Most Holy quicken, not consume us; may the flame of judgment be to us only what it was to the Three Holy Children, over whom the fire had no power!

S E R M O N V.

EQUANIMITY.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 4.

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.

IN other parts of Scripture the prospect of Christ's coming is made a reason for solemn fear and awe, and a call for watching and prayer, but in the verses connected with the text a distinct view of the Christian character is set before us, and distinct duties urged on us. "The Lord is at hand," and what then?—why, if so, we must "rejoice in the Lord;" we must be conspicuous for "moderation;" we must be "careful for nothing;" we must seek from God's bounty, and not from man, whatever we need; we must abound in "thanksgiving;" and we must cherish, or rather we must pray for, and we shall receive from above, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," to "keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Now this is a view of the Christian character definite and complete enough to admit of commenting on,—and it may be useful to show that the thought of Christ's coming not only leads to fear, but to a calm and cheerful frame of mind.

Nothing perhaps is more remarkable than that an Apostle,—a man

of toil and blood, a man combating with powers unseen, and a spectacle for men and Angels, and much more that St. Paul, a man whose natural temper was so zealous, so severe, and so vehement,—I say, nothing is more striking and significant than that St. Paul should have given us this view of what a Christian should be. It would be nothing wonderful, it *is* nothing wonderful, that writers in a day like this should speak of peace, quiet, sobriety, and cheerfulness, as being the tone of mind that becomes a Christian ; but considering that St. Paul was by birth a Jew, and by education a Pharisee, that he wrote at a time when, if at any time, Christians were in lively and incessant agitation of mind ; when persecution and rumours of persecution abounded ; when all things seemed in commotion around them ; when there was nothing fixed ; when there were no Churches to soothe them, no course of worship to sober them, no homes to refresh them ; and, again, considering that the Gospel is full of high and noble, and what may be called even romantic, principles and motives, and deep mysteries ;—and, further, considering that the very topic which the Apostle combines with his admonitions is that awful subject, the coming of Christ ;—it is well worthy of notice, that, in such a time, under such a covenant, and with such a prospect, he should draw a picture of the Christian character as free from excitement and effort, as full of repose, as still and as equable, as if the great Apostle wrote in some monastery of the desert or some country parsonage. Here surely is the finger of God ; here is the evidence of supernatural influences, making the mind of man independent of circumstances ! This is the thought that first suggests itself ; and the second is this, how deep and refined is the true Christian spirit !—how difficult to enter into, how vast to embrace, how impossible to exhaust ! Who would expect such composure and equanimity from the fervent Apostle of the Gentiles ? We know St. Paul could do great things ; could suffer and achieve, could preach and confess, could be high and could be low : but we might have thought that all this was the limit and the perfection of the Christian temper, as he viewed it ; and that no room was left him for the feelings which the text and following verses lead us to ascribe to him.

And yet he who “laboured more abundantly than all” his brethren, is also a pattern of simplicity, meekness, cheerfulness, thankfulness, and serenity of mind. These tempers were special characteristics of St. Paul, and are much insisted on in his Epistles. For instance ;—“Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. . . . Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” He enjoins, that “the aged men be sober, grave, temperate,

sound in faith, in charity, in patience." "The aged women likewise . . . not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands." And "young men" to be "sober-minded." And it is remarkable that he ends this exhortation with urging the same reason as is given in the verse after the text: "looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." In like manner, he says, that Christ's ministers must show "uncorruptness in doctrine, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned;" that they must be "blameless, not self-willed, not soon angry . . . lovers of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate."* All this is the description of what seems almost an ordinary character; I mean, it is so staid, so quiet, so unambitious, so homely. It displays so little of what is striking or extraordinary. It is so negligent of this world, so unexcited, so single-minded.

It is observable, too, that it was foretold as the peculiarity of Gospel times, by the Prophet Isaiah: "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. And My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places."†

Now then let us consider more particularly what is this state of mind, and what the grounds of it. These seem to be as follows:—The Lord is at hand; this is not your rest; this is not your abiding-place. Act then as persons who are in a dwelling not their own; who are not in their own home; who have not their own goods and furniture about them; who, accordingly, make shift and put up with any thing that comes to hand, and do not make a point of things being the best of their kind. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short." What matters it what we eat, what we drink, how we are clothed, where we lodge, what is thought of us, what becomes of us, since we are not at home? It is felt every day, as regards this world, that when we leave home for a while, we are unsettled. This, then, is the kind of feeling which a belief in Christ's coming will create within us. It is not worth while establishing ourselves here; it is not worth while spending time and thought on such an object. We shall hardly have got settled when we shall have to move.

This being apparently the general drift of the passage, let us next enter into the particular portions of it.

1. "Be careful for nothing," he says, or, as St. Peter, "casting all

* Rom. xxii. 16—18. Titus ii. 2—13; i. 7, 8. † Isa. xxxiii. 17, 18.

your care upon Him," or, as He Himself, "Take no thought," or care "for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself."* This of course is the state of mind which is directly consequent on the belief, that "the Lord is at hand." Who would care for any loss or gain to-day, if he knew for certain that Christ would show Himself to-morrow? no one. Well, then, the true Christian feels as he would feel, did he know for certain that Christ would be here to-morrow. For he knows for certain, that at least Christ will come to him when he dies; and faith anticipates his death, and makes it just as if that distant day, if it *be* distant, were past and over. One time or another Christ will come, for certain: and when He once *has* come, it matters not what length of time there was before He came;—however long that period may be, it has an end. Judgment is coming, whether it comes sooner or later, and the Christian realizes that it is coming; that is, time does not enter into his calculation, or interfere with his view of things. When men expect to live out their plans and projects, then they care for them; when they know they will come to nought, they give them over, or become indifferent to them.

So, again, is it with all forebodings, anxieties, mortifications, griefs, resentments of this world. "The time is short." It has sometimes been well suggested, as a mode of calming the mind when set upon an object, or much vexed or angered at some occurrence, what will you feel about all this a year hence? It is very plain that matters which agitate us most extremely now, will then interest us not at all; that objects about which we have intense hope and fear now, will then be to us nothing more than things which happen at the other end of the earth. So will it be with all human hopes, fears, pleasures, pains, jealousies, disappointments, successes, when the last day is come. They will have no life in them; they will be as the faded flowers of a banquet, which do but mock us. Or when we lie on the bed of death, what will it avail us to have been rich, or great, or fortunate, or honoured, or influential? All things will then be vanity. Well, what this world will be understood by all to be then, such is it felt to be by the Christian now. He looks at things as he then will look at them, with an uninterested and dispassionate eye, and is neither pained much nor pleased much at the accidents of life, because they are accidents.

2. Another part of the character under review is, what our translation calls moderation; "Let your moderation be known unto all men," or, as it may be more exactly rendered, your consideration, fairness, or equitableness. St. Paul makes it a part of a Christian character to

* 1 Peter v. 7. Matt. vi 34

have a reputation for candour, dispassionateness, tenderness towards others. The truth is, as soon and in proportion as a person believes that Christ is coming, and recognizes his position as a stranger on earth, who has but hired a lodging in it for a season, he will feel indifferent to the course of human affairs. He will be able to look on, instead of taking a part in them. They will be nothing to him. He will be able to criticise them, and pass judgment on them without partiality. This is what is meant by "our moderation" being acknowledged by all men. Those who have strong interests, one way or the other, cannot be dispassionate observers and candid judges. They are partisans; they defend one set of people, and attack another. They are prejudiced against those who differ from them, or who thwart them. They cannot make allowances, or show sympathy for them. But the Christian has no keen expectations, no acute mortifications. He is fair, equitable, considerate towards all men, because he has no temptation to be otherwise. He has no violence, no animosity no bigotry, no party feeling. He knows that his Lord and Saviour must triumph; he knows that He will one day come from heaven, no one can say how soon. Knowing then the end to which all things tend, he cares less for the road which is to lead to it. When we read a book of fiction, we are much excited with the course of the narrative, till we know how things will turn out; but when we do, the interest ceases. So is it with the Christian. He knows Christ's battle will last till the end; that Christ's cause will triumph in the end; that His Church will last till He comes. He knows what is truth and what is error, where is safety and where is danger; and all this clear knowledge enables him to make concessions, to own difficulties, to do justice to the erring, to acknowledge their good points, to be content with such countenance, greater or less, as he himself receives from others. He does not fear; fear it is that makes men bigots, tyrants, and zealots; but for the Christian, it is his privilege, as he is beyond hopes and fears, suspense and jealousy, so also to be patient, cool, discriminating, and impartial;—so much so, that this very fairness marks his character in the eyes of the world, is "known unto all men."

3. Joy and gladness are also characteristics of him, according to the exhortation in the text, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," and this in spite of the fear and awe which the thought of the last day ought to produce in us. It is by means of these strong contrasts that Scripture brings out to us what is the real meaning of its separate portions. If we had been told merely to fear, we should have mistaken a slavish dread, or the gloom of despair, for godly fear; and if we had been told merely to rejoice, we should perhaps have mistaken a rude freedom and

familiarity for joy ; but when we are told both to fear and to rejoice, we gain thus much at first sight, that our joy is not to be irreverent, nor our fear to be desponding ; that though both feelings are to remain, neither is to be what it would be by itself. This is what we gain at once by such contrasts. I do not say that this makes it at all easier to combine the separate duties to which they relate ; that is a further and higher work ; but thus much we gain at once, a better knowledge of those separate duties themselves. And now I am speaking about the duty of rejoicing, and I say, that whatever be the duty of fearing greatly and trembling greatly at the thought of the Day of judgment, and of course it is a great duty, yet the command so to do cannot reverse the command to rejoice ; it can only so far interfere with it as to explain what it meant by rejoicing. It is as clear a duty to rejoice in the prospect of Christ's coming, as if we were not told to fear it. The duty of fearing does but perfect our joy ; that joy alone is true Christian joy, which is informed and quickened by fear, and made thereby sober and reverent.

How joy and fear can be reconciled, words cannot show. Act and deed alone can show how. Let a man try both to fear and to rejoice, as Christ, and His Apostles tell him, and in time he will learn how ; but when he has learned, he will be as little able to explain how it is he does both, as he was before. He will seem inconsistent, and may easily be proved to be so, to the satisfaction of irreligious men, as Scripture is called inconsistent. He becomes the paradox which Scripture enjoins. This is variously fulfilled in the case of men of advanced holiness. They are accused of the most opposite faults ; of being proud, and of being mean ; of being over-simple, and being crafty ; of having too strict, and, at the same time, too lax a conscience ; of being unsocial, and yet being worldly ; of being too literal in explaining Scripture, and yet of adding to Scripture, and superseding Scripture. Men of the world, or men of inferior religiousness, cannot understand them, and are fond of criticising those who, in seeming to be inconsistent, are but like Scripture.

But to return to the case of joy and fear. It may be objected, that at least those who fall into sin, or who have in times past sinned grievously, cannot have this pleasant and cheerful temper which St. Paul enjoins. I grant it. But what is this but saying that St. Paul enjoins us *not* to fall into sin ? When St. Paul warns us against sadness and heaviness, of course he warns us against those things which make men sad and heavy ; and therefore especially against sin, which is an especial enemy of joyfulness. It is not that sorrowing for sin is wrong when we *have* sinned, but the *sinning* is wrong which causes the sorrowing. When a person has sinned, he cannot do any thing

better than sorrow. He ought to sorrow ; and so far as he does sorrow, he is certainly *not* in the perfect Christian state ; but it is his sin that has forfeited it. And yet even here sorrow is not inconsistent with rejoicing. For there are few men who are really in earnest in their sorrow, but after a time may be conscious that they are so ; and when man knows himself to be in earnest, he knows that God looks mercifully upon him ; and this gives him sufficient reason for rejoicing, even though fear remains. St. Peter could appeal to Christ, “ Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.” We of course cannot appeal so unreservedly—still we can timidly appeal—we can say that we humbly trust, that, whatever be the measure of our past sins, and whatever of our present self-denial, yet at bottom we do wish and strive to give up the world and to follow Christ ; and in proportion as this sense of sincerity is strong upon our minds, in the same degree shall we rejoice in the Lord, even while we fear.

4. Once more, peace is part of this same temper also. “ The peace of God,” says the Apostle, “ which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” There are many things in the Gospel to alarm us, many to agitate us, many to transport us, but the end and issue of all these is *peace*. “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace.” It may be asked indeed whether warfare, perplexity, and uncertainty be not the condition of the Christian here below ; whether St. Paul himself does not say that he has “ the care,” or the anxiety, “ of all the Churches,” and whether he does not plainly evince and avow in his Epistles to the Galatians and Corinthians much distress of mind ? “ Without were fightings, within fears.”* I grant it ; he certainly shows at times much agitation of mind ; but consider this. Did you ever look at an expanse of water, and observe the ripples on the surface ? Do you think that disturbance penetrates below it ? Nay ; you have seen or heard of fearful tempests on the sea ; scenes of horror and distress, which are in no respect a fit type of an Apostle’s tears or sighings about his flock. Yet even these violent commotions do not reach into the depths. The foundations of the ocean, the vast realms of water which girdle the earth, are as tranquil and as silent in the storm as in a calm. So it is with the souls of holy men. They have a well of peace springing up within them unfathomable ; and though the accidents of the hour may make them seem agitated, yet in their hearts they are not so. Even Angels joy over sinners repentant, and, as we may therefore suppose, grieve over sinners impenitent,—yet who shall say that they have not perfect peace ?

* 2 Cor. vii. 5.

Even Almighty God Himself deigns to speak of His being grieved, and angry, and rejoicing,—yet is He not the unchangeable? And in like manner, to compare human things to divine, St. Paul had perfect peace, as being stayed in soul on God, though the trials of life might vex him.

For, as I have said, the Christian has a deep, silent, hidden peace, which the world sees not,—like some well in a retired and shady place, difficult of access. He is the greater part of his time by himself, and what he is in solitude, that is his real state. What he is when left to himself and to his God, that is his true life. He can bear himself; he can (as it were) joy in himself, for it is the Grace of God within him, it is the presence of the Eternal Comforter, in which he joys. He can bear, he finds it pleasant, to be with himself at all times,—“never less alone than when alone.” He can lay his head on his pillow at night, and own in God’s sight, with overflowing heart, that he wants nothing,—that he “is full and abounds,”—that God has been all things to him, and that nothing is not his which God could give him. More thankfulness, more holiness, more of heaven he needs indeed, but the thought that he can have more, is not a thought of trouble but of joy. It does not interfere with his peace to know that he may grow nearer God. Such is the Christian’s peace, when with a single heart and the Cross in his eye, he addresses and commends himself to Him with whom the night is as clear as the day. St. Paul says that “the peace of God shall *keep* our hearts and minds.” By “keep” is meant “guard,” or “garrison,” our hearts; so as to keep out enemies. And he says, our “hearts and minds” in contrast to what the world sees of us. Many hard things may be said of the Christian and done against him, but he has a secret preservative or charm, and minds them not.

These are some few suggestions on that character of mind which becomes the followers of Him who was once “born of a pure Virgin,” and who bids them as “new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.” The Christian is cheerful, easy, kind, gentle, courteous, candid, unassuming; has no pretence, no affectation, no ambition, no singularity; because he has neither hope nor fear about this world. He is serious, sober, discreet, grave, moderate, mild, with so little that is unusual or striking in his bearing, that he may easily be taken at first sight for an ordinary man. There are persons who think religion consists in ecstasies, or in set speeches;—he is not of those. And it must be confessed, on the other hand, that there is a common-place state of mind which does show itself calm, composed, and candid, yet is very far from the true Christian temper.

In this day especially it is very easy for men to be benevolent, liberal, and dispassionate. It costs nothing to be dispassionate when you feel nothing, to be cheerful when you fear nothing, to be generous or liberal when what you give is not your own, and to be benevolent and considerate when you have no principles and no opinions. Men now-a-days are moderate and equitable, not because the Lord is at hand, but because they do not feel that He is coming. Quietness is a grace, not in itself, only when it is grafted on the stem of faith, zeal, self-abasement, and diligence.

May it be our blessedness, as years go on, to add one grace to another, and advance upward, step by step, neither neglecting the lower after attaining the higher, nor aiming at the higher before attaining the lower. The first grace is faith, the last is love; first comes zeal, afterwards comes loving-kindness; first comes humiliation, then comes peace; first comes diligence, then comes resignation. May we learn to mature all graces in us;—fearing and trembling, watching and repenting, because Christ is coming; joyful, thankful, and careless of the future, because He is come.

S E R M O N V I.

REMEMBRANCE OF PAST MERCIES.

GENESIS xxxii. 10.

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant.

THE spirit of humble thankfulness for past mercies, which these words imply, is a grace to which we are especially called in the Gospel. Jacob, who spoke them, knew not of those great and wonderful acts of love with which God has since visited the race of man. But though he might not know the depths of God's counsels, he knew himself so far as to know that he was worthy of no good thing at all, and he knew also that Almighty God had shown him great mercies and great truth:

mercies, in that He had done for him good things, whereas he had deserved evil; and truth, in that He had made him promises, and had been faithful to them. In consequence, he overflowed with gratitude when he looked back upon the past; marvelling at the contrast between what he was in himself and what God had been to him.

Such thankfulness, I say, is eminently a Christian grace, and is enjoined on us in the New Testament. For instance, we are exhorted to be "thankful," and to let "the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord."

Elsewhere, we are told to "speak to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Again,—“Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

Again,—“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*

The Apostle, who writes all this, was himself an especial pattern of a thankful spirit: “Rejoice in the Lord alway,” he says, “and again I say, Rejoice.” “I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I have all, and abound; I am full.” Again: “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.”† O great Apostle! how could it be otherwise, considering what he had been and what he was,—transformed from an enemy to a friend, from a blind Pharisee to an inspired preacher? And yet there is another Saint, besides the patriarch Jacob, who is his fellow in this excellent grace,—like them, distinguished by great vicissitudes of life, and by the adoring love and the tenderness of heart with which he looked back upon the past:—I mean, “David, the son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet Psalmist of Israel.”‡

The book of Psalms is full of instances of David’s thankful spirit, which I need not cite here, as we are all so well acquainted with them.

* Col. iii. 15, 16. Eph. v. 19, 20. Phil. iv. 6. 1 Thess. v. 18.

† Phil. iv. 4, 11, 18. 1 Tim. i. 12—14. ‡ 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

I will but refer to his thanksgiving, when he set apart the precious materials for the building of the Temple, as it occurs at the end of the first book of Chronicles ; when he rejoiced so greatly, that he and his people had the heart to offer freely to God, and thanked God for his very thankfulness. “ David, the king . . . rejoiced with great joy ; wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation ; and David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel, our Father for ever and ever . . . Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all ; and in Thine hand is power and might, and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious Name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort ? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.”*

Such was the thankful spirit of David, looking back upon the past, wondering and rejoicing at the way in which his Almighty Protector had led him on, and at the works He had enabled him to do ; and praising and glorifying Him for His mercy and truth. David, then, Jacob, and St. Paul, may be considered the three great patterns of thankfulness, which are set before us in Scripture ;—saints, all of whom were peculiarly the creation of God’s grace, and whose very life and breath it was humbly and adoringly to meditate upon the contrast between what, in different ways, they had been, and what they were. A perishing wanderer had unexpectedly become a Patriarch, a shepherd a King, and a persecutor an Apostle ; each had been chosen, at God’s inscrutable pleasure, to fulfil a great purpose, and each, while he did his utmost to fulfil it, kept praising God that he was made His instrument. Of the first, it was said, “ Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated ;” of the second, that “ He refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, even the hill of Sion, which he loved : He chose David also His servant, and took him away from the sheepfolds.” And St. Paul says of himself, “ Last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”†

These thoughts naturally come over the mind at this season,‡ when we are engaged in celebrating God’s grace, in making us His children, by the incarnation of His Only-begotten Son, the greatest and most wonderful of all His mercies. And to the Patriarch Jacob, our minds are now particularly turned, by the first lessons for this day, taken from the Prophet Isaiah, in which the Church is addressed and comforted

* 1 Chron. xxix. 9—14.

† Rom. ix. 13. Psalm lxxviii. 68—71. 1 Cor. xv. 8.

‡ Second Sunday after Christmas

under the name of Jacob. Let us then, in this season of thankfulness, and at the beginning of a new year, take a brief view of the character of this Patriarch ; and though David and Isaiah be the Prophets of grace, and St. Paul its special herald and chief pattern, yet, if we wish to see an actual specimen of a habit of thankfulness, occupied in the remembrance of God's mercies, I think we shall not be wrong in betaking ourselves to Jacob.

Jacob's distinguishing grace then, as I think it may be called, was a habit of affectionate musing upon God's providences towards him in times past, and of overflowing thankfulness for them. Not that he had not other graces also, but this seems to have been his distinguishing grace. All good men have in their measure all graces ; for He, by whom they have any, does not give one apart from the whole : He gives the root, and the root puts forth branches. But since time, and circumstances, and their own use of the gift, and their own disposition and character, have much influence on the mode of its manifestation ; so it happens that each good man has his own distinguishing grace apart from the rest, his own particular hue, and fragrance, and fashion, as a flower may have. As, then, there are numberless flowers on the earth, all of them flowers, and so far like each other ; and all springing from the same earth, and nourished by the same air and dew, and none without beauty ; and yet some are more beautiful than others ; and of those which are beautiful, some excel in colour, and others in sweetness, and others in form : and then, again, those which are sweet have such perfect sweetness, yet so distinct, that we do not know how to compare them together, or to say which is the sweeter ; so is it with souls filled and nurtured by God's secret grace. Abraham, for instance, Jacob's forefather, was the pattern of faith. This is insisted on in Scripture, and it is not here necessary to show that he was so. It will be sufficient to say, that he left his country at God's word ; and at the same word, took up the knife to slay His only son. Abraham seems to have had something very noble and magnanimous about him. He could realize and make present to him things unseen. He followed God in the dark as promptly, as firmly, and with as cheerful heart and bold stepping, as if he were in broad daylight. There is something very great in this ; and, therefore, St. Paul calls Abraham *our* father, the father of Christians as well as of Jews. For we are especially bound to walk by faith, not by sight ; and are blessed in faith, and justified by faith, as was faithful Abraham.

Now (if I may say it, with due reverence to the memory of that favoured servant of God, in whose praise I am now speaking) that faith in which Abraham excelled was not Jacob's characteristic ex-

cellence. Not that he had not faith, and great faith, else he would not have been so dear to God. His buying the birthright and gaining the blessing from Esau were proofs of faith. Esau saw little or nothing in them,—he was profane ; easily parted with the one, and had no high ideas of the other. However, Jacob's faith, earnest and vigorous as it was, was not like Abraham's. Abraham kept his affections loose from every thing earthly, and was ready, at God's word, to slay his only son. Jacob had many sons, and may we not even say that he indulged them overmuch ? Even as regards Joseph, whom he so deservedly loved, beautiful and touching as his love of him is, yet there is a great contrast between his feelings towards the "son of his old age," and those of Abraham towards Isaac, the unexpected offspring of his hundredth year ; nor only such, but his long-promised only son, with whom were the promises. Again : Abraham left his country,—so did Jacob, ; but Abraham, at God's word,—Jacob, from necessity on the threat of Esau. Abraham, from the first, felt that God was his portion and his inheritance, and, in a great and generous spirit, he freely gave up all he had, being sure that he should find what was more excellent in doing so. But Jacob, in spite of his really living by faith, wished (if we may so say), as one passage of his history shows, to see before he fully believed. When he was escaping from Esau and came to Bethel, and God appeared to him in a dream and gave him promises, but not yet the performance of them,—what did he do ? Did he simply accept them ? He says, "*If* God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, *then* shall the Lord be my God."* He makes his obedience, in some sense, depend on a condition ; and although we must not, and need not, take the words as if he meant that he would not serve God *till* and *unless* He did for Him what He had promised, yet they seem to show a fear and anxiety, gentle indeed, and subdued, and very human, (and therefore, the more interesting and winning in the eyes of us common men, who read his words,) yet an anxiety which Abraham had not. We feel Jacob to be more like ourselves than Abraham was.

What, then, was Jacob's distinguishing grace, as faith was Abraham's ? I have already said it : I suppose, thankfulness. Abraham appears ever to have been looking forward in *hope*,—Jacob looking back in *memory*. The one rejoicing in the future, the other in the past. The one setting his affections on the future, the other on the past. The one making his way towards the promises, the other musing over their

* Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

fulfilment. Not that Abraham did not look back also, and Jacob, as he says, on his death-bed, "wait for the salvation" of God; but this was the difference between them, Abraham was a hero, Jacob "a plain man, dwelling in tents."

Jacob seems to have had a gentle, tender, affectionate, timid mind—easily frightened, easily agitated, loving God so much that he feared to lose Him, and, like St. Thomas perhaps, anxious for sight and possession from earnest desire of having them. Were it not for faith, love would become impatient, and thus Jacob desired to possess, not from cold incredulity or hardness of heart, but from such a loving impatience. Such men are easily downcast, and must be treated kindly; they soon despond, they shrink from the world, for they feel its rudeness, which bolder natures do not. Neither Abraham nor Jacob loved the world. But Abraham did not fear, did not feel it. Jacob felt and winced, as being wounded by it. You recollect his touching complaints, "All these things are against me!"—"Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."—"If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved." Again, elsewhere we are told, "All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted." At another time, "Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." Again, "the spirit of Jacob their father revived."* You see what a child-like, sensitive, sweet mind he had. Accordingly, as I have said, his happiness lay, not in looking forward to the hope, but backwards upon the experience of God's mercies towards him. He delighted lovingly to trace, and gratefully to acknowledge, what had been given, leaving the future to itself.

For instance, when coming to meet Esau, he brings before God in prayer, in words of which the text is part, what He had already done for him, recounting His past favours with great and humble joy in the midst of his present anxiety. O God of my father Abraham," he says, "and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, *which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.*" Again, after he had returned to his own land, he proceeded to fulfil the promise he had made to consecrate Bethel as a house of God, "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, *who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.* Again, to Pharaoh, still dwelling on the past: "The days of the years of my pil-

* Gen. xlii. 36, 38; xliii. 14; xxxvii. 35; xlv. 26, 27.

grimace are an hundred and thirty years ; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been," he means, in themselves, and as separate from God's favour, "and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." Again, when he was approaching his end, he says to Joseph, "God Almighty *appeared unto me* at Luz," that is, Bethel, "in the land of Canaan, and blessed me." Again, still looking back, "As for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and I buried her there, in the way of Ephrath." Again, his blessing upon Ephraim and Manasseh: "God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, *the God which fed me all my life long unto this day*, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." Again he looks back on the land of promise, though in the plentifulness of Egypt: "Behold I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." And when he gives command about his burial, he says: "I am to be gathered unto my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite." He gives orders to be buried with his fathers. This was natural, but observe, he goes on to *enlarge* on the subject, after his special manner: "There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and *there I buried Leah*." And further on, when he speaks of waiting for God's salvation, which is an act of hope, he so words it as at the same time to dwell upon the past: "*I have waited*," he says, that is, all my life long, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord."* Such was Jacob, living in memory rather than in hope, counting times, recording seasons, keeping days; having his history by heart, and his past life in his hand; and as if to carry on his mind into that of his descendants, it was enjoined upon them, that once a year every Israelite should appear before God with a basket of fruit of the earth, and call to mind what God had done for him and his father Jacob, and express his thankfulness for it. "A Syrian ready to perish was my father," he had to say, meaning Jacob; "and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, and became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. . . . And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs and with wonders; and hath brought us into this land . . . that floweth with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which Thou, O Lord, hast given me."†

* Gen. xxxii. 9, 10; xxxv. 3; xlvii. 9; xlviii. 3. 7. 15, 16. 21; xlix. 29—31. 18.

† Deut. xxvi. 5—10.

Well were it for us, if we had the character of mind, instanced in Jacob, and enjoined on his descendants ; the temper of dependence upon God's providence, and thankfulness under it, and careful memory of all He has done for us. It would be well if we were in the habit of looking at all we have, as God's gift, undeservedly given, and day by day continued to us solely by His mercy. He gave; He may take away. He gave us all we have, life, health, strength, reason, enjoyment the light of conscience ; whatever we have good and holy within us ; whatever faith we have ; whatever of a renewed will ; whatever love towards Him ; whatever power over ourselves ; whatever prospect of heaven. He gave us relatives, friends, education, training, knowledge, the Bible, the Church. All comes from Him. He gave; He may take away. Did He take away, we should be called on to follow Job's pattern, and be resigned : "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."* While He continues His blessings, we should follow David and Jacob, by living in constant praise and thanksgiving, and in offering up to Him of His own.

We are not our own, any more than what we possess is our own. We did not make ourselves ; we cannot be supreme over ourselves. We cannot be our own masters. We are God's property by creation, by redemption, by regeneration. He has a triple claim upon us. Is it not our happiness thus to view the matter ? Is it any happiness, or any comfort to consider that we *are* our own ? It may be thought so by the young and prosperous. These may think it a great thing to have every thing, as they suppose, their own way,—to depend on no one,—to have to think of nothing out of sight,—to be without the irksomeness of continual acknowledgment, continual prayer, continual reference of what they do to the will of another. But as time goes on, they, as all men, will find that independence was not made for man—that it is an unnatural state—may do for a while, but will not carry us on safely to the end. No ; we are creatures, and, as being such, we have two duties, to be resigned and to be thankful.

Let us then view God's providences towards us more religiously than we have hitherto done. Let us try to gain a truer view of what we are, and where we are, in His kingdom. Let us humbly and reverently attempt to trace His guiding hand in the years which we have hitherto lived. Let us thankfully commemorate the many mercies He has vouchsafed to us in time past, the many sins He has not remembered, the many dangers He has averted, the many prayers He has answered, the many mistakes He has corrected, the many warnings, the many

* Job i. 21.

lessons, the much light, the abounding comfort which He has from time given. Let us dwell upon times and seasons, times of trouble, times of joy, times of trial, times of refreshment. How did He cherish us as children ! How did He guide us in that dangerous time when the mind began to think for itself, and the heart to open to the world ! How did He with His sweet discipline restrain our passions, mortify our hopes, calm our fears, enliven our heavinesses, sweeten our desolateness, and strengthen our infirmities ! How did He gently guide us towards the strait gate ; how did He allure us along His everlasting way, in spite of its strictness, in spite of its loneliness, in spite of the dim twilight in which it lay ! He has been all things to us. He has been, as He was to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our God, our shield, and great reward, promising and performing, day by day. "Hitherto hath He helped us." "He hath been mindful of us, and He will bless us." He has not made us for nought ; He has brought us thus far, in order to bring us further, in order to bring us on to the end. "He will never leave us nor forsake us ; so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my Helper ; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." We may "cast all our care upon Him, who careth for us." What is it to us how our future path lies, if it be but His path ? What is it to us whither it leads us, so that in the end it leads to Him ? What is it to us what He puts upon us, so that He enables us to undergo it with a pure conscience, a true heart, not desiring any thing of this world in comparison of Him ? What is it to us what terror befalls us, if He be but at hand to protect and strengthen us ? "Thou, Israel," He says, "art My servant Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel ; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." "Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not ; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art Mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."*

* Is. xli. 8. 14 ; xliii. 1—3.

SERMON VII.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

HEBREWS ii. 11.

Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one ; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

OUR Saviour's birth in the flesh is an earnest, and, as it were, beginning of our birth in the Spirit. It is a figure, promise, or pledge of our new birth, and it effects what it promises. As He was born, so are we born also ; and since He was born, therefore we too are born. As He is the Son of God by nature, so are we sons of God by grace ; and it is He who has made us such. This is what the text says, He is the "Sanctifier," we the "sanctified." Moreover, He and we, says the text, "are all of one." God sanctifies the angels, but there the Creator and the creature are not of one. But the Son of God and we are of one ; He has become "the firstborn of every creature ;" He has taken our nature, and in and through it He sanctifies us. He is our brother by virtue of His incarnation, and, as the text says, "He is not ashamed to call us brethren ;" and, having sanctified our nature in Himself, He communicates it to us.

This is the wonderful economy of grace, or mystery of godliness, which should be before our minds at all times, but especially at this season,* when the Most Holy took upon Him our flesh of "a pure Virgin," "by the operation of the Holy Ghost, without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin." God "dwelleth in the Light which no man can approach unto ;" He "is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." "His garment," as described in the Prophet's Vision, is "white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool ; His throne the fiery flame, and His wheels burning fire." And in like manner the Son of God, because He is the Son, is Light also. He is "the True Light, which

* Christmas.

lighteth every man that cometh into the world." On His transfiguration "His face did shine as the sun," and "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow," "white and glistening." And when He appeared to St. John, "His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow ; and His eyes were as a flame of fire : and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burnt in a furnace ; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in His strength."* Such was our Lord's holiness because He was the Son of God from eternity. There was always the Father, always the Son ; always the Father, *therefore* always the Son, for the Name of Father implies the Son, and never was there a time when the Father Almighty was not, and in the Father the Son also. He it is who is spoken of in the beginning of St. John's Gospel, when it is said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Soon after the same Apostle speaks of Him as "in the bosom of the Father." And He speaks Himself of "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was." And St. Paul calls Him "the Brightness of God's glory, and the express Image of His person." And elsewhere, "the Image of the Invisible God." Thus what our Lord is, that none other can be ; He is the Only-begotten Son ; He is of God's nature, and of one substance with the Father, which cannot be said of any creature. He is one with God, and His nature is secret and incommunicable. Hence St. Paul contrasts His dignity with that of Angels, the highest of all creatures, with a view of showing the infinite superiority of the Son. "Unto which of the Angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee ?" Again, "When He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the Angels of God worship Him." And again, "To which of the Angels saith He at any time, Sit on My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ?" Of the Angels we are told, "He putteth no trust in His saints ; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight ;" but our Lord is His "beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased.†"

He it was who created the worlds ; He it was who interposed of old time in the affairs of the world, and showed Himself to be a living and observant God, whether men thought of Him or not. Yet this great God condescended to come down on earth from His heavenly throne, and to be born into His own world ; showing Himself as the Son of God in a new and second sense, in a created nature, as well as in His

* 1 Tim. vi. 16. 1 John i. 5. Dan. vii. 9. John i. 9. Matt. xvii. 2. Mark ix. 3. Luke ix. 29. Rev. i. 14—16.

† John i. 1 ; xvii. 5. Heb. i. 3, et seqq. Col. i. 15. Job xv. 15. Matt. iii. 17.

eternal substance. Such is the first reflection which the birth of Christ suggests.

And next, observe, that since He was the All-holy Son of God, though He condescended to be born into the world, He necessarily came into it in a way suitable to the All-holy, and different from that of other men. He took our nature upon Him, but not our sin ; taking our nature in a way above nature. Did He then come from heaven in the clouds ? did He frame a body for Himself out of the dust of the earth ? No ; He was, as other men, “made of a woman,” as St. Paul speaks, that He might take on Him, not another nature, but the nature of man. It had been prophesied from the beginning, that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head. “I will put enmity,” said Almighty God to the serpent at the fall, “between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed ; It shall bruise thy head.”* In consequence of this promise, pious women, we are told, were in the old time ever looking out in hope that in their own instance peradventure the promise might find its accomplishment. One after another hoped in turn that she herself might be mother of the promised king ; and therefore marriage was in repute, and virginity in disesteem, as if then only they had a prospect of being the Mother of Christ, if they waited for the blessing according to the course of nature, and amid the generations of men. Pious women they were, but little comprehending the real condition of mankind. It was ordained, indeed, that the Eternal Word should come into the world by the ministration of a woman ; but born in the way of the flesh He could not be. Mankind is a fallen race ; ever since the fall there has been a “fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam ; . . . so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.” And “the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.” “That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.” “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?” “How can he be clean that is born of a woman ?” Or as holy David cries out, “Behold I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.”† No one is born into the world without sin ; or can rid himself of the sin of his birth except by a second birth through the Spirit. How then could the Son of God have come as a Holy Saviour, had He come as other men ? How could He have atoned for our sins, who Himself had guilt ? or cleansed our hearts, who was impure Himself ? or raised up our heads, who was Himself the son of

* Gen. iii. 15.

† John iii. 6. Job. xiv. 4 ; xxv. 4. Ps. li. 5.

shame? Surely any such messenger had needed a Saviour for his own disease, and to such a one would apply the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself." Priests among men are they who have to offer "first for their own sins, and then for the people's;"* but He, coming as the immaculate Lamb of God, and the all-prevailing Priest, could not come in the way in which those fond persons thought. He came by a new and living way, by which He alone has come, and which alone became Him. The prophet Isaiah had been the first to announce it; "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign," he says, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel." And accordingly St. Matthew, after quoting this text, declares its fulfilment in the instance of the Blessed Mary. "All this," he says, "was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." And further, two separate Angels, one to Mary, one to Joseph, declare who the adorable Agent was, by whom this miracle was wrought. "Joseph, thou son of David," an Angel said to him, "fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;" and what followed from this? He proceeds, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Because He was "incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," therefore He was "Jesus," a "Saviour from sin." Again, the Angel Gabriel had already said to Mary, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." And then he proceeded to declare, that her Son should be called Jesus; that He "should be great, and should be called the Son of the Highest;" and that "of His Kingdom there shall be no end." And he concludes by announcing, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."† Because God the Holy Ghost wrought miraculously, therefore was her Son a "Holy Thing," "the Son of God," and "Jesus," and the heir of an everlasting kingdom.

This is the great mystery which we are now celebrating, of which mercy is the beginning, and sanctity the end: according to the Psalm, "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." He who is all purity came to an impure race to raise them to His purity. He, the brightness of God's glory, came in a body of flesh, which was pure and holy as Himself, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish;" and this He did for our sake, "that we might be partakers of His holiness." He needed not a human nature

* Heb. vii. 27.

† Matt. i. 20, 21. Luke i. 28—35.

for Himself,—He was all-perfect in His original divine nature ; but He took upon Himself what was ours for the sake of us. He who “hath made of one blood all nations of men,” so that in the sin of one all sinned, and in the death of one all died, He came in that very nature of Adam, in order to communicate to us that nature as it is in His Person, that “our sinful bodies might be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood ;” to make us partakers of the divine nature ; to sow the seed of eternal life in our hearts ; and to raise us from the corruption that is in the world through lust, to that immaculate purity and that fulness of grace which is in Him. He, who is the first principle and pattern of all things, came to be the beginning and pattern of human kind, the firstborn of the whole creation. He, who is the everlasting Light, became the Light of men ; He, who is the Life from eternity, became the Life of a race dead in sin ; He, who is the Word of God, came to be a spiritual Word, “dwelling richly in our hearts,” an “engrafted Word, which is able to save our souls ;” He, who is the co-equal Son of the Father, came to be the Son of God in our flesh, that He might raise us also to the adoption of sons, and might be the first among many brethren. And this is the reason why the Collect for the season, after speaking of our Lord as the Only-begotten Son, and born in our nature of a pure Virgin, proceeds to speak of our new birth and adopted sonship, and renewal by the grace of the Holy Ghost.

And when He came into the world, He was a pattern of sanctity in the circumstances of His life, as well as in His birth. He did not implicate and contaminate Himself with sinners. He came down from heaven, and made a short work in righteousness, and then returned back again where He was before. He came into the world, and He speedily left the world ; as if to teach us how little He Himself, how little we His followers, have to do with the world. He, the Eternal Everliving Word of God, did not outlive Methuselah’s years, nay, did not even exhaust the common age of man ; but He came and He went, before men knew that He had come, like the lightning shining from one side of heaven unto the other, as being the beginning of a new and invisible creation, and having no part in the old Adam. He was in the world, but not of the world ; and while He was here, He, the Son of man, was still in heaven : and as well might fire feed upon water, or the wind be subjected to man’s bidding, as the Only-begotten Son really be portion and member of that perishable system in which He condescended to move. He could not rest or tarry upon earth ; He did but do His work in it ; He could but come and go.

And while He was here, since He could not acquiesce or pleasure

Himself in the earth, so He would none of its vaunted goods. When He humbled Himself unto His own sinful creation, He would not let that creation minister to Him of its best, as if disdaining to receive offering or tribute from a fallen world. It is only nature regenerate which may venture to serve the Holy One. He would not accept lodging or entertainment, acknowledgment or blandishment, from the kingdom of darkness. He would not be made a king; He would not be called Good Master; He would not accept where He might lay His head. His life lay not in man's breath, or man's smile; it was hid in Him from whom He came and to whom He returned.

"The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." He seemed like other men to the multitude. Though conceived of the Holy Ghost, He was born of a poor woman, who, when guests were numerous, was thrust aside, and gave birth to Him in a place for cattle. O wondrous mystery, early manifested, that even in birth He refused the world's welcome! He grew up as the carpenter's son, without education, so that when He began to teach, His neighbours wondered how one who had not learned letters, and was bred to a humble craft, should become a prophet. He was known as the kinsman and intimate of humble persons; so that the world pointed to them when He declared Himself, as if their insufficiency was an argument against His claims. He was brought up in a town of low repute, so that even the better sort doubted whether good could come out of it. No; He would not be indebted to this world for comfort, aid, or credit; for "the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." He came to it as a benefactor, not as a guest; not to borrow from it, but to impart to it.

And when He grew up, and began to preach the kingdom of heaven, the Holy Jesus took no more from the world than before. He chose the portion of those Saints who preceded and prefigured Him, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and His forerunner John the Baptist. He lived at large, without the ties of home or peaceful dwelling; He lived as a pilgrim in the land of promise; He lived in the wilderness. Abraham had lived in tents in the country which his descendants were to enjoy. David had wandered for seven years up and down the same during Saul's persecutions. Moses had been a prisoner in the howling wilderness, all the way from Mount Sinai to the borders of Canaan. Elijah wandered back again from Carmel to Sinai. And the Baptist had remained in the deserts from his youth. Such in like manner was our Lord's manner of life, during His ministry: He was now in Galilee, now in Judæa; He is found in the mountain, in the wilderness, and

in the city ; but He vouchsafed to take no home, not even His Almighty Father's Temple at Jerusalem.

Now all this is quite independent of the special objects of mercy which brought Him upon earth. Though He had still submitted Himself by an incomprehensible condescension to the death of the cross at length, yet why did He from the first so spurn this world, when He was not atoning for its sins ? He might at least have had the blessedness of brethren who believed in Him ; He might have been happy and revered at home ; He might have had honour in His own country ; He might have submitted but at last to what He chose from the first ; He might have delayed His voluntary sufferings till that hour when His Father's and His own will made Him the sacrifice for sin.

But He did otherwise ; and thus He becomes a lesson to us who are His disciples. He, who was so separate from the world, so present with the Father, even in the days of His flesh, calls upon us, His brethren, as we are in Him and He in the Father, to show that we are what we have been made, by renouncing the world while in the world, and living as in the presence of God.

Let them consider this, who think that the perfection of our nature still consists, as before the Spirit was given, in the exercise of all its separate functions, animal and mental, not in the subjection and sacrifice of what is inferior in us to what is more excellent. Christ, who is the beginning and pattern of the new creature, lived out of the body while He was in it. His death indeed was required as an expiation ; but why was His life so mortified, if such austerity be not man's glory ?

Let us at this season approach Him with awe and love, in whom resides all perfection, and from whom we are allowed to gain it. Let us come to the Sanctifier to be sanctified. Let us come to Him to learn our duty, and to receive grace to do it. At other seasons of the year we are reminded of watching, toiling, struggling, and suffering ; but at this season we are reminded simply of God's gifts towards us sinners. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." We are reminded that we can do nothing, and that God does everything. This is especially the season of grace. We come to see and to experience God's mercies. We come before Him as the helpless beings, during His ministry, who were brought on beds and couches for a cure. We come to be made whole. We come as little children to be fed and taught, "as new-born babes, desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby."* This is a time for innocence, and purity, and gentleness, and mildness,

and contentment, and peace. It is a time in which the whole Church seems decked in white, in her baptismal robe, in the bright and glistering raiment which she wears upon the Holy Mount. Christ comes at other times with garments dyed in blood; but now He comes to us in all serenity and peace, and He bids us rejoice in Him, and to love one another. This is not a time for gloom, or jealousy, or care, or indulgence, or excess, or license:—not for “rioting and drunkenness,” not for “chambering and wantonness,” not for “strife and envying,”* as says the Apostle; but for putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, “who knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”

May each Christmas, as it comes, find us more and more like Him, who as at this time became a little child for our sake, more simple-minded, more humble, more holy, more affectionate, more resigned, more happy, more full of God.

SERMON VIII.

THE STATE OF INNOCENCE.

† ECCLESIASTES vii. 29.

God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.

THE state of our parents as God made them, “upright” and “very good,” in the day that they were created, presents much to excite our interest and sympathy, though we, their descendants, have passed away into a far different state. Since that time our nature has gone through many fortunes,—through much evil to greater good. That primeval state is no longer ours. It is no longer ours, though it is no longer forfeited. The penalties are removed; the flaming sword no longer bars the entrance of Eden; yet have we not returned to it. For so is it

* Rom. xiii. 13.

with all that happens to us,—the past *never* returns, not in what it contained, any more than in itself. Each time has its own peculiar attributes ; it is impressed with its own characters. We recognise them in memory. When from time to time this or that passage of our lives rises in our minds, it comes to us with its own savour. We know it as if by taste and scent, and we know that that peculiar and indescribable token, be it good or bad, never can attach to anything else. And what is true of indifferent things, is true also when right and wrong come into question, and in the great destinies of man. If we sin and forfeit what God has given, not God Himself, (such seems to be His will,) not God Himself, in the fulness of His mercies, ever brings back what we were. He may wash out our sin,—He may give us blessings, greater blessings than we had,—He does not give us the same. When man was driven out of Paradise, it was for good and all,—he never has returned,—he never will return,—he has been born again, but not into possession of the garden of innocence : he has a rest in store, and a happier one,—a more glorious paradise, but still another.

This being so, it would seem as if there was little to interest us now in the first condition of Adam. As lost, it would only raise remorse and distress ; as found again it is something new. And yet, though Almighty God does not bring back the past, His dispensations move forward in an equable uniform way, like circles expanding about their centre ;—the greater good to come being, not indeed the same as the past good, but nevertheless resembling it, as a substance resembles its type. In the past we see the future as if in miniature and outline. Indeed how can it be otherwise ? seeing that all goods are but types and shadows of God Himself the Giver, and are like each other because they are like Him. Hence the garden of Eden, though long past away, is brought again and again to our notice in the progress of God's dealings with us, not only in order to instruct us by the past, but unavoidably, if I may so speak, from the resemblance which one condition of God's favour bears to another ; of Adam's first state to the Law, and the Law to the Gospel, and the Gospel to the state of rest after death, and that to heaven. For instance, the land that flowed with milk and honey, was but a visible return of the lost garden ; and in a manner reversed the sentence of banishment which God has laid upon our first parents. Again, the reign of Christ too is imaged as a state in which the beasts return to the dominion of man, and are harmless. When the serpent is no longer venomous, and when " the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose," and " instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree ;" when " the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing,

and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.”* And so of the intermediate state; for our Lord says the penitent thief, “To-day shalt thou be with Me in *paradise*.” And lastly, to describe heaven too, in the last words which God has vouchsafed to us, ending His revelations as He began them, He sets before us the vision of a happy garden. “He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which had twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations.”† Thus God takes away the less to give the greater,—not reversing the past, but remedying and heightening it; preserving the pattern of it, and so keeping us from forgetting it.

Therefore we may well look back on the garden of Eden, as we would on our own childhood. That childhood is a type of the perfect Christian state; our Saviour so made it when He said that we must become as little children to enter His kingdom. Yet it too is a thing past and over. We are not, we cannot be children; grown men have faculties, passions, aims, principles, views, duties, which children have not; still, however, we must become *as* little children; in them we are bound to see Christian perfection, and to labour for it with them in our eye. Indeed there is a very much closer connection between the state of Adam in Paradise and our state in childhood, than may at first be thought; so that in surveying Eden, we are in a way looking back on our own childhood; and in aiming to be children again, we are aiming to be as Adam on his creation. Let us then now compare together these two parallel states, and in doing so let us have an eye to that third state, higher than either; I mean our regenerate state in Christ, of which these two are both types.

There is, for what we know, a very mysterious real connection between the garden of Eden and our childhood, on which, however, I am not going to enlarge. I mean, the doctrine of original sin does connect together, in some unknown and awful way, Adam and each of us. If, as we believe, Adam’s sin is imputed to each of us, if we enter into the world with it upon us, in all its consequences, just as if it were ours, certainly we cannot be in Adam’s state when he was in Eden (rather what he was when leaving it,) but still so much may be said, that our childhood is in some sense a continuation of Adam’s state when in Eden, a carrying it on through and after his fall and not a beginning; though in thus speaking we use words beyond our own meaning.

* Isai. xxxv. 1; lv. 12, 13.

† Rev. xxii. 1, 2.

But, dismissing this subject, I would have you observe, that as far as we are given to know it, Adam's state in Eden seems to have been like the state of children now—in being simple, inartificial, inexperienced in evil, unreasoning, uncalculating, ignorant of the future, or (as men now speak) unintellectual. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was kept from him. Also, I would observe, that whereas we who do know good and evil, are bid to become as simple children ; so again we are promised a paradise in which shall be no Tree of Knowledge. St. John describes to us the future paradise, and tells us of the Tree of Life there, but it has no Tree of Knowledge ; instead of which “the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” It would seem then, taking human nature according to what it was on its creation, according to what it is in *childhood*, (which is the type of its perfection,) and according to what is implied about its future state, that in all these states the “knowledge of good and evil” is away, whatever be the meaning of that phrase, and that instead of it the Lord is our Light, “and in His light shall we see light.” This remarkably corresponds with the words of the text : “God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many *inventions*.” But to return to our first parents.

The state in Eden seems, I say, to be very much what is called the life of innocents, of such as are derided and contemned by men, as they now are, their degenerate descendants.

1. First they were placed in a garden to cultivate it ; how much is implied even in this ! “The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.” If there was a mode of life free from tumult, anxiety, excitement, and fever of mind, it was the care of a garden. You will say it could not be otherwise, while he was but one man in the whole world ;—the accumulation of human beings, the mutual action of mind on mind, this it is which creates all the hurry and variety of life. Adam was a hermit, whether he would or no. True ; but does not this very circumstance that God made him such, point out to us what is our true happiness, if we were given it, which we are not. At least we see in type what our perfection is, in these first specimens of our nature, which need not, unless God had so willed, have been created in this solitary state, but might have been myriads at once, as the Angels were created. And let it be noted, that, when the second Adam came, He returned, nay, more than returned to that life which the first had originally been allotted. He too was alone, and lived alone, the immaculate Son of a Virgin Mother ; and He chose the mountain summit or the garden as His home. Save always, that in His case sorrow and pain went with His loneliness ; not, like Adam, eating

freely of all trees but one, but fasting in the wilderness for forty days—not tempted to eat of that one through wantonness, but urged in utter destitution of food to provide Himself with some necessary bread,—not as a king giving names to fawning brutes, but one among the wild beasts,—not granted a help meet for His support, but praying alone in the dark morning,—not dressing the herbs and flowers, but dropping blood upon the ground in agony,—not falling into a deep sleep in the garden, but buried there after His passion;—yet still like the first Adam, solitary,—like the first Adam, living with His God and Holy Angels. And this is the more remarkable, both because He came to do a great work in a short ministry, and because the same characteristic will be found in His servants also; nay, in His most laboriously employed and most successfully active servants, before and after Him. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were as “plain men dwelling in tents;” Moses lived for forty years a shepherd’s life; and when at length he was set over the chosen people, still in one of the most critical moments of his government, he had long retirements in the Mount with God. Samuel was brought up within the Temple: Elijah lived in the deserts; so did the Baptist, his antitype. Even the Apostles had their seasons of solitude. We hear of St. Peter at Joppa; and St. Paul had his labours again and again suspended by imprisonment; as if such occasional respite from exertion were as necessary for the spirit as sleep is necessary for the body. If then the life of Christ and His servants be any guide to us, certainly it would appear as if the simplicity and the repose of life, with which human nature began, is an indication of its perfection. And again, does not our infancy teach us the same lesson? which is especially a season when the soul is left to itself, withdrawn from its fellows as effectually as if it were the only human being on earth, like Adam in his enclosed garden, fenced off from the world, and visited by Angels.

2. Fenced off from the world, nay, fenced off even from himself; for so it is, and most strange too, that our infant and childish state is hidden from ourselves. We cannot recollect it. We know not what it was, what our thoughts in it were, and what our probation, more than we know Adam’s. This is a remarkable analogy for such persons as question an object to the account of our first parents in Eden. To what does their difficulty amount at the utmost, but to this, that they do not know what their state was? that there is a depth and a secret about the Word of God, which they cannot penetrate? And is it greater than that which hangs over themselves personally, in their own most mysterious infancy? the history of which, doubtless, if it could be put into words, and set before us, would be as strange and foreign to

us, would be as little recognised by us as our own, as the second and third chapters of Genesis. And here again occurs a parallel in our state of perfection ; “ we know not what we *shall* be.” We know not what we are tending to, any more than what we have started from. St. Paul was once caught up to Paradise, and he witnesses to the incomprehensible nature of those doings, which were begun and broken off in Eden. “ I knew such a man . . . how he was caught up into paradise, and heard *unspeakable* words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”* And all this is further paralleled by the state of regeneration in the present world, as far as this, that those who advance far in the divine life, both are themselves hidden, and see things hidden from common men. “ The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” “ The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.” “ The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not.” And on the other hand, “ The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.” “ He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” “ To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.”†

3. Another resemblance between the state of Adam in paradise, and that of children is this, that children are saved, not by their purpose and habits of obedience, not by faith and works, but by the influence of baptismal grace ; and into Adam God “ breathed the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Far different is our state since the fall :—at present our moral rectitude, such as it is, is acquired by trial, by discipline : but what does this really mean ? by sinning, by suffering, by correcting ourselves, by improving. We advance to the truth by experience of error ; we succeed through failures. We know not how to do right except by having done wrong. We call virtue a mean,—that is, considering it to lie between things that are wrong. We know what is right, not positively, but negatively ;—we do not see the truth at once and make towards it, but we fall upon and try error, and find it is *not* the truth. We grope about by touch, not by sight, and so by a miserable experience exhaust the possible modes of acting till nought is left, but truth, remaining. Such is the process by which we succeed ; we walk to heaven backward ; we drive our arrows at a mark, and think him most skilful whose short-comings are the least.

So it is not with children baptized and taken away. So was it not while Adam was still upright, as God created him. Adam might probably have matured in holiness, had he remained in his first state, with-

* 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.

† John i. 5. 10. 1 John iii. 1. Ps. xxv. 14. 1 John v. 10. Rev. ii. 17.

out experience of evil, whether pain or error ; for he had that within him which was to him more than all the habits which trial and discipline painfully form in us. Unless it be presumptuous to say it, grace was to him instead of a habit ; grace was his clothing within and without. Grace dispensed with efforts towards holiness, for holiness lived in him. We do not know what we mean by a habit, except as a state or quality of mind *under* which we act in this or that particular way ; it is a permanent power in the mind ; and what is grace but this ? What then man fallen gains by dint of exercise, working up towards it by religious acts, that Adam already acted *from*. He had that light within him, which he might make brighter by obedience, but which he had not to create. Not till he fell, did he lose that supernatural endowment, which raised him into a state above himself, and made him in a certain sense more than man, and what the Angels are, or Saints hereafter. This robe of innocence and sanctity he lost when he fell ; he knew and confessed that he had lost it ; but while he possessed it, he was sinless and perfect, and acceptable to God, though he had gone through nothing painful to obtain it. He tired of it ; he tired of being upright from the heart only, and not in the way of reason. He desired to obey, not in the way of children, but of those who choose for themselves. He ate of the forbidden fruit, that he might choose with his eyes open between good and evil, and his eyes *were* opened, and he “knew that he was naked ;” for the strength of God’s inward glory went from him, and he was left henceforth to struggle on towards obedience as he best might in his fallen state by experience of sin and misery. And here again let it be observed, as in former points of the parallel, that this gift which sanctified Adam and saves children, does become the ruling principle of Christians generally when they advance to perfection. According as habits of holiness are matured, principle, reason, and self-discipline are unnecessary ; a moral instinct takes their place in the breast, or rather, to speak more reverently, the Spirit is sovereign there. There is no calculation, no struggle, no self-regard, no investigation of motives. We act from love. Hence the Apostles say, “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things ;” “Ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.”*

Now if the doctrine on which this parallel is founded be true, which one cannot doubt, how miserable that state, which is so often praised and magnified as the perfection of our nature, whereas it is the very curse that has come upon us,—the knowledge of evil. Yet can any

* 1 John. ii. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

thing be more certain that men do glory in it; glory in their shame, and consider they are advancing in moral excellence, when they are but gaining a knowledge of moral evil?

For instance, I suppose great numbers of men think that it is slavish and despicable to go on in that narrow way in which they are brought up as children, without experience of the world. It is the narrow way, and they call it narrow in contumely. They fret at the restraints of their father's roof, and wish to judge and act for themselves. They think it manly to taste the pleasures of sin; they think it manly to know what sin is before condemning it. They think they are then better judges, when they are not blindly led by others, but have taken upon them, by their own act, the yoke of evil. They think it a fine thing to curse and swear, and to revel, and to ridicule God's sacred truth, and to profess themselves the devil's scholars. They look down upon the innocent, upon women and children, and solitaries, and holy and humble men of heart, who, like the cherubim, see God and worship, as unfit for the great business of life, and worthless in the real estimate of things. They think it no great harm to leave off a correct life for a time, so that they return to it at length. They consider that it is even more pleasing to God, a more "reasonable service," to subdue evil than to follow good. They consider that to bring "the motions of sin" under, and show their power over it, is a higher thing than not to have them to fight against.* They think it more noble to have an enemy to overcome and rebels to control than to be in peace. Alas! they commonly do not acknowledge so much as that there is a rebel power within them; they call sin but a venial evil, and no wonder that, so thinking, they can bear to talk of trying it, and cannot understand that it is better to be ever pure than to have been at one time stained.

This is one kind of knowledge, and most miserable doubtless, which we have gained by the fall, to know sin by experience;—not to gaze at it with awe as the Angels do, or as children when they wonder how there can be wicked men in the world, but to admit it into our hearts. Alas! ever since the fall this has been more or less the state of the natural man, to live in sin; and though here and there, under the secret stirrings of God's grace, he has sought after God and obeyed Him, it has been in a grovelling sort, like worms working their way upwards through the dust of the earth, turning evil against itself, and unlearning it from having known it. And such too seems to be one chief way in which Providence carries on His truth even under the Gospel; not

* Vide Froude's Sermons, XIII.

by a direct flood of light upon the Church, but by setting one mischief upon another, bidding one serpent destroy another, the less the greater; thus gradually thinning the brood of sin, and wasting them by their own contrariety. And in this way doubtless we are to regard sects and heresies, as witnesses and confessors of particular truths, as God's means of destroying evil,—mortal themselves, yet greedy of each other.

4. The mention of heresy and error opens upon us a large subject to which I will but allude. What then is intellect itself, as exercised in the world, but a fruit of the fall, not found in paradise or in heaven, more than in little children, and at the utmost but tolerated in the Church, and only not incompatible with the regenerate mind? Children do not go by reason: Adam in his state of innocence had no opportunity for aught but what we should call a calm and simple life. To God Most High we ascribe moral excellences, truth, faithfulness, love, justice, holiness; again we speak of His power, knowledge, and wisdom: but it would be profane even to utter His great Name in connection with those powers of mind which we call ability, and prize so highly. Christ again displays no eloquence or power of words, no subtle or excursive reasoning, no brilliancy, ingenuity, or fertility of thought, such as the world admires. Nay, the same truth holds as regards our own regenerate state; for though doubtless every power of the intellect has its use in the Church, yet surely, after all, faith is made supreme, and reason then only is considered in place when it is subordinate. "Blessed are they," says our Lord, "that have not seen and yet have believed;" and St. Paul again, "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."* What a contrast to such passages is presented by a mere catalogue of the powers of mind by which men succeed in life, and by which the structure of society is kept together! Take the world as it is, with its intelligence, its bustle, its feverish efforts, its works, its results, the ceaseless ebb and flow of the great tide of mind: view society, I mean, not in its adventitious evil, but in its essential characters, and what is all its intellectual energy but a fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and though not sinful, yet, in fact, the consequence of sin? Consider its professions, trades, pursuits, or, in the words of the text, "inventions;" trace them down to their simplest forms and first causes, and what is

* John xx. 29. 1 Cor. i. 22. 24.

their parent, but the loss of original uprightness? What place have its splendours, triumphs, speculations, or theories in that pure and happy region which was our cradle, or in that heaven which is to be our rest? Dexterity, promptness, presence of mind, sagacity, shrewdness, powers of persuasion, talent for business, what are these but developments of intellect which our fallen state has occasioned, and probably far from the highest which our mind is capable of? And are not these and others at best only of use in remedying the effects of the fall, and, so far, indeed, demanding of us deep thankfulness towards the Giver, but not having a legitimate employment except in a world of sickness and infirmity?

Now, in thus speaking, let it be observed, I am not using light words of what is a great gift of God and one distinguishing mark of man over the brutes, our reason; I have but spoken of the *particular exercises* in which it has its life in the world, as we see them; and these, though in themselves excellent, and often admirable, yet would not have been but for sin, and, now that they are, subserve the purposes of sin. Reason, I say, is God's gift: but so are the passions; Adam had the gift of reason, and so had he passions; but he did not *walk* by reason, nor was he led by his passions; he, or at least Eve, was tempted to follow passion and reason, instead of her Maker, and she fell. Since that time passion and reason have abandoned their due place in man's nature, which is one of subordination, and conspired together against the Divine light within him, which is his proper guide. Reason has been as guilty as passion here. God made man upright, and grace was his strength; but he has found out many inventions, and his strength is reason.

To conclude: Let us learn from what has been said, whatever gifts of mind we have, henceforth to keep them under, and to subject them to innocence, simplicity, and truth. Let our characters be formed upon faith, love, contemplativeness, modesty, meekness, humility. I know well that men differ so much here one from another, that it were folly to expect their outward character to appear one and the same. One man carries his gentleness on the surface, or his humbleness, or his simplicity; and his intellectual gifts are hid within him. We look at him, and cannot understand how he should possess those endowments of mind, which we know he has. Another's graces are buried, or nearly so; he overflows with thought, or is powerful in speech, or takes a keen view of the world, and is ever present and ready wherever he is; while he keeps his self-abasement and seriousness to himself. These are accidents; "the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."* Let us labour

* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

to approve ourselves to Christ. If we be in a crowd, still be we as hermits in the wilderness ; if we be rich as poor, if married as single, if gifted in mind, still as little children. Let the tumult of error teach us the simplicity of truth, the miseries of guilt, the peace of innocence, and "the many inventions" of the reason the stability of faith. Let us, with St. Paul, be "all things to all men," while we "live unto God ;" "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," "in malice children, in understanding men."

SERMON IX.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

HEBREWS ii. 16.

For verily He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.

WE are all of one nature, because we are sons of Adam ; we are all of one nature, because we are brethren of Christ. Our old nature is common to us all, and so is our new nature. And because our old nature is one and the same, therefore is it that our new nature is one and the same. Christ could not have taken the nature of every one of us, unless every one of us had the same nature already. He could not have become our brother, unless we were all brethren already ; He could not have made us His brethren, unless by becoming our brother ; so that our brotherhood in the first man is the means towards our brotherhood in the second.

I do not mean to limit the benefits of Christ's atoning death, or to dare to say that it may not effect ends infinite in number and extent beyond those expressly recorded. But still so far is plain, that it is by taking our nature that He has done for us what He has done for none else ; that, by taking the nature of Angels, He would not have done for us what He has done ; that it is not only the humiliation of the Son of God, but His

humiliation in our nature, which is our life. He might have humbled Himself in other natures besides human nature ; but it was decreed that "the Word" should be "made flesh." "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same." And, as the text says, "He took not hold of Angels, but He took hold of the seed of Abraham."

And since His taking on Him our nature is a necessary condition of His imparting to us those great benefits which have accrued to us from His death, therefore, as I have said, it was necessary that we should, one and all, have the same original nature, in order to be redeemed by Him ; for, in order to be redeemed, we must all have that nature which He the Redeemer took. Had our natures been different, He would have redeemed one and not another. Such a common nature we have, as being one and all children of one man, Adam ; and thus the history of our fall is connected with the history of our recovery.

Christ then took our nature, when He would redeem it ; He redeemed it by making it suffer in His own person : He purified it, by making it pure in His own person. He first sanctified it in Himself, made it righteous, made it acceptable to God, submitted it to an expiatory passion, and then He imparted it to us. He took it, consecrated it, broke it, and said, "Take, and divide it among yourselves."

And moreover, He raised the condition of human nature, by submitting it to trial and temptation ; that what it failed to do in Adam, it might be able to do in Him. Or, in other words, which it becomes us rather to use, He condescended, by an ineffable mercy, to be tried and tempted in it ; so that, whereas He was God from everlasting, as the Only-begotten of the Father, He took on Him the thoughts, affections, and infirmities of man, thereby, through the fulness of His Divine Nature, to raise those thoughts and affections, and destroy those infirmities, that so, by God's becoming man, men, through brotherhood with Him, might in the end become as gods.

There is not a feeling, not a passion, not a wish, not an infirmity, which we have, which did not belong to that manhood which He assumed, except such as is of the nature of sin. There was not a trial or temptation which befalls us, but was, in kind at least, presented before Him, except that He had nothing within Him, sympathizing with that which came to Him from without. He said upon His last and greatest trial, "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me ;" yet at the same time we are mercifully assured that "we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but" one, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And again, "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."*

But what I would to-day draw your attention to, is the thought with which I began, viz. the comfort vouchsafed to us in being able to contemplate Him whom the Apostle calls the man Christ Jesus, the Son of God in our flesh. I mean, the thought of Him, "the beginning of the creation of God," "the first-born of every creature," binds us together by a sympathy with one another, as much greater than that of nature, as Christ is greater than Adam. We were brethren, as being of one nature with him, who was "of the earth, earthy;" we are now brethren, as being of one nature with "the Lord from heaven." All those common feelings, which we have by birth, are far more intimately common to us, now that we have obtained the second birth. Our hopes and fears, likes and dislikes, pleasures and pains, have been moulded upon one model, have been wrought into one image, blended and combined unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." What they become, who have partaken of "the Living Bread, which came down from heaven," the first converts showed, of whom it is said that they "had all things common;" that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;" as having "one body, and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all."† Yes, and one thing needful; one narrow way; one business on earth; one and the same enemy; the same dangers; the same temptations; the same afflictions; the same course of life; the same death; the same resurrection; the same judgment. All these things being the same, and the new nature being the same, and from the Same, no wonder that Christians can sympathize with each other, even as by the power of Christ sympathizing in and with each of them.

Nay, and further, they sympathize together in those respects too, in which Christ has not, could not have, gone before them; I mean in their mutual sins. This is the difference between Christ's temptation and ours: His temptations were without sin, but ours with sin. Temptation with us almost certainly involves sin. We sin, almost spontaneously, in spite of His grace. I do not mean, God forbid, that His grace is not sufficient to subdue all sin in us; or that, as we come more and more under its influence, we are not less and less exposed to the involuntary impression of temptation, and much less to voluntary sin; but that so it is, our evil nature remains in us in spite of that new nature which the touch of Christ communicates to us; we have still earthly principles in our souls, though we have heavenly ones, and these so sympathize with temptation, that, as a mirror reflects

* Heb. iv. 15; ii. 18.

† Acts ii. 44; iv. 32. Eph. iv. 4-6.

promptly and of necessity what is presented to it, so the body of death which infects us, when the temptations of this world assail it,—when honour, pomp, glory, the world's praise, power, ease, indulgence, sensual pleasure, revenge, are offered to it, involuntarily responds to them, and sins,—sins because it *is* sin ; sins before the better mind can control it, because it exists, because its life is sin ; sins *till* it is utterly subdued and expelled from the soul by the gradual growth of holiness and the power of the Spirit. Of all this, Christ had nothing. He was “born of a pure Virgin,” the immaculate Lamb of God ; and though He was tempted, yet it was by what was good in the world's offers, though unseasonable and unsuitable, and not by what was evil in them. He overcame what it had been unbecoming to yield to, the while feeling the temptation. He overcame also what was sinful, but He felt no temptation to it.

And yet it stands to reason, that though His temptations differed from ours in this main respect, yet His presence in us makes us sympathize one with another, even in our sins and faults, in a way which is impossible without it ; because, whereas the grace in us is common to us all, the sins against that grace are common to us all also. We have the same gifts to sin against, and therefore the same powers, the same responsibilities, the same fears, the same struggles, the same guilt, the same repentance, and such as none can have but we. The Christian is one and the same, wherever found ; as in Christ, who is perfect, so in himself, who is training towards perfection ; as in that righteousness which is imputed to him in fulness, so in that righteousness which is imparted to him only in its measure, and not yet in fulness.

This is a consideration full of comfort, but of which commonly we do not avail ourselves as we might. It is one comfortable thought, and the highest of all, that Christ, who is on the right hand of God exalted, has felt all that we feel, sin excepted ; but it is very comfortable also, that the new and spiritual man, which He creates in us, or creates us into,—that is, the Christian, as he is naturally found everywhere,—has everywhere the same temptations, and the same feelings under them, whether innocent or sinful ; so that, as we are all bound together in our Head, so are we bound together as members of one body, in that body, and believe, obey, sin, and repent all in common.

I do not wish to state this too strongly. Doubtless there are very many differences between Christian and Christian. Though their nature is the same, and their general duties, hindrances, helps, privileges, and rewards the same, yet certainly there are great differences of character, and peculiarities belonging either to individuals or to classes. High and low, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, man and woman, bond

and free, learned and unlearned, though equal in the Gospel, do in many respects differ, so that descriptions of what passes in the mind of one will often appear strange and new to the other. Their temptations differ, and their diseases of mind. And the difference becomes far greater, by the difficulty persons have of expressing exactly what they mean, so that they convey wrong ideas to one another, and offend and repel those who really do feel what they feel, though they would express themselves otherwise.

Again, of course there is this great difference between Christians, that some are penitents and others have never fallen away since they were brought near to God ; some have fallen for a time, and grievously ; others for long years, yet perhaps only in lesser matters. These circumstances will make real differences between Christian and Christian, so as sometimes even to remove the possibility of sympathy almost altogether. Sin certainly does contrive this victory in some cases, to hinder us being even fellows in misery ; it separates us while it seduces, and, being the broad way, has different lesser tracks marked out upon it.

But still, after all such exceptions, I consider that Christians, certainly those who are in the same outward circumstances, are very much more like each other in their temptations, inward diseases, and methods of cure, than they at all imagine. Persons think themselves isolated in the world ; they think no one ever felt as they feel. They do not dare to expose their feelings, lest they should find that no one understands them. And thus they suffer to wither and decay what was destined in God's purpose to adorn the Church's paradise with beauty and sweetness. Their "mouth is not opened," as the Apostle speaks, nor their "heart enlarged ;" they are "straitened" in themselves, and deny themselves the means they possess of at once imparting instruction and gaining comfort.

Again : we suffer the world's opinion to hang upon us as a load, or the influence of some system of religion which is in vogue. It very frequently happens that ten thousand people all say what not one of them feels, but each says it because every one else says it, and each fears not to say it lest he should incur the censure of all the rest. Such are very commonly what are called the opinions of the age. They are bad principles or doctrines, or false notions or views, which live in the mouths of men, and have their strength in their public recognition. Of course by proud men, or blind, or carnal, or worldly, these opinions which I speak of are really felt and entered into ; for they are the natural growth of their own evil hearts. But very frequently the same are set forth, and heralded, and circulated, and become current opin-

ions, among vast multitudes of men who do not feel them. These multitudes, however, are obliged to receive them by what is called the force of public opinion; the careless of course carelessly, but the better sort superstitiously. Thus ways of speech come in, and modes of thought quite alien to the minds of those who give into them, who feel them to be unreal, unnatural, and uncongenial to themselves, but consider themselves obliged, often from the most religious principles, not to confess their feelings about them. They dare not say, they dare not even realize to themselves their own judgments. Thus it is that the world cuts off the intercourse between soul and soul, and substitutes idols of its own for the one true Image of Christ, in and through which only souls can sympathize. Their best thoughts are stifled, and when by chance they hear them put forth elsewhere, as may sometimes be the case, they feel as it were conscious and guilty, as if some one were revealing something against them, and they shrink from the sound as from a temptation, as something pleasing indeed but forbidden. Such is the power of false creeds to fetter the mind and bring it into captivity; false views of things, of facts, of doctrines, are imposed on it tyrannically, and men live and die in bondage, who were destined to rise to the stature of the fulness of Christ. Such, for example, I consider to be, among many instances, the interpretation which is popularly received among us at present, of the doctrinal portion of St. Paul's Epistles, an interpretation which has troubled large portions of the Church for a long three hundred years.

Again: I say, we are much more like each other, even in our sins, than we fancy. I do not of course mean to say, that we are one and all at the same point in our Christian course, or have one and all had the same religious history in times past; but that, even taking a man who has never fallen from grace, and one who has fallen most grievously and repented, even they will be found to be very much more like each other in their view of themselves, in their temptations, and feelings upon those temptations, than they might fancy beforehand. This we see most strikingly instanced when holy men set about to describe their real state. Even bad men at once cry out, "This is just our case," and argue from it that there is no difference between bad and good. They impute all their own sins to the holiest of men, as making their own lives a sort of comment upon the text which his words furnish, and appealing to the appositiveness of their own interpretation in proof of its correctness. And I suppose it cannot be denied, concerning all of us, that we are generally surprised to hear the strong language which good men use of themselves, as if such confessions showed them to be more like ourselves, and much less holy than we had fancied them

to be. And on the another hand, I suppose, any man of tolerably correct life, whatever his positive advancement in grace, will seldom read accounts of notoriously bad men, in which their ways and feelings are described, without being shocked to find that these more or less cast a meaning upon his own heart, and bring out into light and colour lines and shapes of thought within him, which, till then, were almost invisible. Now this does not show that bad and good men are on a level, but it shows this, that they are of the same nature. It shows that the one has within him in tendency, what the other has brought out into actual existence ; so that the good has nothing to boast of over the bad, and while what is good in him is from God's grace, there is an abundance left, which marks him as being beyond all doubt of one blood with those sons of Adam who are still far from Christ their Redeemer. And if this is true of bad and good, much more is it true in the case of which I am speaking, that is of good men one with another ; of penitents and the upright. They understand each other far more than might at first have been supposed. And whereas their sense of the heinousness of sin rises with their own purity, those who are holiest will speak of themselves in the same terms as impure persons use about themselves ; so that Christians, though they really differ much, yet as regards the power of sympathising with each other will be found to be on a level. The one is not too high or the other too low. They have common ground ; and as they have one faith and hope, and one Spirit, so also they have one and the same temptations, and one and the same confession.

It were well if we understand all this. Perhaps the reason why the standard of holiness among us is so low, why our attainments are so poor, our view of the truth so dim, our belief so unreal, our general notions so artificial and external, is this, that we dare not trust each other with the secret of our hearts. We have each the same secret, and we keep it to ourselves, and we fear that, as a cause of estrangement, which really would be a bond of union. We do not probe the wounds of our nature thoroughly ; we do not lay the foundation of our religious profession in the ground of our heart ; we make clean the outside of things ; we are amiable and friendly to each other in words and deeds, but our love is not enlarged, our bowels of affection are straitened, and we fear to let the intercourse begin at the root ; and, in consequence, our religion, viewed as a social system, is hollow. The presence of Christ is not in it.

To conclude. If it be awful to tell to another in our own way what we are, what will be the awfulness of that Day when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed ! Let us ever bear this in mind when we fear

that others should know what we really are:—whether we are right or wrong in hiding our sins now, it is a vain notion if we suppose they will always be hidden. The Day shall declare it; the Lord will come in judgment; He “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”* With this thought before us, surely it is a little thing whether or not man knows us here. *Then* will be knowledge without sympathy: then will be shame with everlasting contempt. Now though there be shame, there is comfort and a soothing relief; though there be awe, it is greater on the side of him who hears than of him who makes avowal.

S E R M O N X.

RIGHTEOUSNESS NOT OF US, BUT IN US.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 30, 31.

Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

ST. PAUL is engaged, in the chapter from which these words are taken, in humbling the self-conceit of the Corinthians. They had had gifts given them; they did not forget they had them; they used, they abused them; they forgot, not that they were theirs, but that they were given them. They seem to have thought that those gifts were theirs by a sort of right, because they were persons of more cultivation of mind than others, of more knowledge, more refinement. Corinth was a wealthy place; it was a place where all nations met, and where men saw much of the world; and it was a place of science and philosophy. It had indeed some good thing in it which Athens had not. The wise men of Athens heard the Apostle and despised him, but of

* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Corinth it was to him by Christ Himself, "I have much people in this city."* Yet, though there were elect of God at Corinth, yet in a place of so much luxury and worldly wisdom, difficulties so great stood in the way of a simple, humble faith, as to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect,—as to bring it to pass that those who were saved were saved "as by fire." In spite of the clear views which the Apostle had doubtless given them on their conversion of their utter nothingness in themselves; in spite too of their confessing it, (for we can hardly suppose that they said in so many words that their gifts were their own,) yet they did not feel that they came from God. They seemed, as it were, to claim them, or at least to view their possession of them as a thing of course; they acted as if they were their own, not with humbleness and gratitude towards their Giver, not with a sense of responsibility, not with fear and trembling, but as if they were lords over them, as if they had sovereign power to do what they would with them, as if they might use them from themselves and for themselves.

Our bodily powers and limbs also come from God, but they are in such sense part of our original formation, (or if I may so say) of our essence, that though we ought ever to lift our hearts in gratitude to God while we use them, yet we use them as *our* instruments, ministers, organs. They spring from us, and (as I may say) hold of us, and we use them for our own purposes. Well, this seems to have been the way in which the Corinthians used their supernatural gifts, as if they were parts of themselves,—as natural faculties, instead of influences *in* them, but not *of* them, *from* the Giver of all good,—not with awe, not with reverence, not with worship. They considered themselves not members of the Kingdom of saints, and dependent on an unseen Lord, but still members of an earthly community, still rich men, still scribes, still philosophers, still disputants, who had the *addition* of certain gifts, who had aggrandized their existing position by the reception of Christianity. They became proud when they should have been thankful. They had forgotten that to be members of the Church they must become as little children; that they must give up all, that they might win Christ; that they must become poor in spirit to gain the true riches; that they must put off philosophy if they would speak wisdom among the perfect. And, therefore, St. Paul reminds them that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called;" and that all true power, all true wisdom flows from Christ, who is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God;" and that all who are Christians indeed, renounce their own power and their own wisdom, and come to Him

* Acts xviii. 10.

that He may be the Source and Principle of their power, and of their wisdom ; that they may depend on Him, and hold of Him, not of themselves ; that they may exist in Him, or have Him in them ; that they may be (as it were) His members ; that they may glory simply in Him, not in themselves. For, whereas the wisdom of the world is but foolishness in God's sight, and the power of the world but weakness, God had set forth His Only-begotten Son to be the First-born of creation, and the standard and original of true life ; to be a wisdom of God and a power of God, and a "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" of God, to all those who are found in Him. "Of Him," says he, "are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us a wisdom from God, namely, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

In every age of the Church, not in the primitive age only, Christians have been tempted to pride themselves on their gifts, or at least to forget that they are gifts, and to take them for granted. Ever have they been tempted to forget their own responsibilities, their having received what they are bound to improve, and the duty of fear and trembling, while improving it. On the other hand, how they ought to behave under a sense of their own privileges, St. Paul points out when he says to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."* God is in you for righteousness, for sanctification, for redemption, through the Spirit of His Son, and you must use His influences, His operations, not as your own, (God forbid!) not as you would your own mind or your own limbs, irreverently, but as His presence. All your knowledge is from Him : all good thoughts are from Him ; all power to pray is from Him ; your Baptism is from Him ; the consecrated elements are from Him ; your growth in holiness is from Him. You are not your own, you have been bought with a price, and a mysterious power is working in you. Oh that we felt all this as well as were convinced of it !

This then is one of the first elements of Christian knowledge and a Christian spirit, to refer all that is good in us, all that we have of spiritual life and righteousness, to Christ our Saviour ; to believe that He works in us, or to put the same thing more pointedly, to believe that saving truth, life, light, and holiness are not *of* us, but must be *in* us. I shall now enlarge on each of these two points.

1. Whatever we have, is not of us, but of God. This surely it will not take many words to prove. Our unassisted nature is represented

* Phil. ii. 13.

in Scripture as the source of much that is evil, but not of any thing that is good. We read much in Scripture of *evil* coming out of the natural heart, but nothing of good coming out of it. When did not the multitude of men turn away from Him who is their life? when was it that the holy were not the few, and the unholy the many? and what does this show but that the law of man's nature tends towards evil, not towards good? As is the tree, so is its fruit; if the fruit be evil, therefore the tree must be evil. When was the face of human society, which is the fruit of human nature, other than evil? When was the power of the world an upholder of God's truth? When was its wisdom an interpreter of it? or its rank an image of it? Shall we look at the early age of the world? What fruit do we find there? "The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." "God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." Shall we find good in man's nature after the flood more easily than before? "And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do . . . So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth." Shall we pass on to the days of David? "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no not one." Three times did God look down from heaven, and three times was man the same, God's enemy, a rebel against his Maker. Let us see if Solomon will lighten this fearful testimony. He says, "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." Shall we ask of the prophet Isaiah? He answers, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities as the wind have taken us away." Or Jeremiah? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Or what did our Lord Himself, when He came in the flesh, witness of the fruits of the heart? He said, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." And will His coming have improved the world? How will it be, when He comes again? "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"* What then

* Gen. vi. 11. 5, 6; xi. 6--8. Ps. xiv. 2, 3. Eccl. ix. 3. Isa. lxiv. 6. Jer. xvii. 9. Matt. xv. 19. Luke xviii. 8.

human nature *tends* to, is very plain, and according to the end, so I say must be the beginning. If the end is evil, so is the beginning; if the termination is astray, the first direction is wrong. "Out of the abundance or the heart the mouth speaketh," and the hand worketh; and such as is the work and the word, such is the heart. Nothing then can be more certain, if we go by Scripture, not to speak of experience, than that the present nature of man is evil, and not good; that evil things come from it, and not good things. If good things come from it, they are the exception, and therefore not of it, but in it merely; first given to it, and then coming from it; not of it by nature, but in it by grace. Our Lord says expressly, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I say unto thee, Ye must be born again.* And again, "Without Me ye can do nothing,"† and St. Paul, "I can do all things through Christ, that strengtheneth me." And again, in the Epistle before us, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"‡

This is that great truth which is the foundation of all true doctrine as to the way of salvation. All teaching about duty and obedience, about attaining heaven, and about the office of Christ towards us, is hollow and unsubstantial, which is not built *here*, in the doctrine of our original corruption and helplessness; and, in consequence, of original guilt and sin. Christ Himself indeed is the foundation, but a broken, self-abased, self-renouncing heart is (as it were) the ground and soil, in which the foundation must be laid; and it is but building on the sand to profess to believe in Christ, yet not to acknowledge that without Him we can do nothing. It is what is called the Pelagian heresy, of which many of us perhaps have heard the name. I am not indeed formally stating what that heresy consists in, but I mean, that, speaking popularly, I may call it the belief, that "holy desires, good counsels, and just works," can come of *us*, can be *from* us, as well as *in* us: whereas they are from God only; from whom, and not from ourselves, is that righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, which is in us,—from whom is the washing away of our inward guilt, and the implanting in us of a new nature. But when men take it for granted that they are natural objects of God's favour,—when they view their privileges and powers as natural things,—when they look upon their Baptism as an ordinary work, bringing about its results as a matter of course,—when they come to Church without feeling that they are highly

* John iii 7.

† John xv. 5.

‡ 1 Cor. iv 7.

favoured in being allowed to come,—when they do not understand the necessity of prayer for God's grace,—when they refer every thing to system, and subject the provisions of God's free bounty to the laws of cause and effect,—when they think that education will do everything, and that education is in their own power,—when in short they think little of the Church of God, which is the great channel of God's mercies, and look upon the Gospel as a sort of literature or philosophy, contained in certain documents, which they may use as the instruction of other books ; then, not to mention other instances, are they practically Pelagians, for they make themselves their own centre, instead of depending of Almighty God and his ordinances.

2. And, secondly, while truth and righteousness are not of us, it is quite as certain that they are also in us if we be Christ's ; not merely nominally given to us and imputed to us, but really implanted in us by the operation of the Blessed Spirit. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when He came on earth in our flesh, made a perfect atonement, " sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." He was born of a woman, He wrought miracles, He fasted and was tempted in the desert, He suffered and was crucified, He was dead and buried ; He rose again from the dead, He ascended on high, and " liveth ever " with the Father,—all for our sakes. And as His incarnation and death were in order to our salvation, so He accomplished the end which that humiliation had in view. All was done that needed to be done except what could not be done at a time, when they were not yet in existence on whom it was to be done. All was done for us except the actual grant of mercy made to us one by one. He saved us by anticipation, but we were not yet saved in fact, for as yet we were not. But every thing short of this was then finished. Satan was vanquished ; sin was atoned for ; the penalty was paid ; God was propitiated ; righteousness, sanctification, redemption, life, all were provided for the sons of Adam ; and all that remained to do was to dispense, to impart, these divine gifts to them one by one. This was not done, because it could not be done all at once ; it could not be done forthwith to individuals, and salvation was designed in God's counsels to be an individual gift. He did not once for all restore the whole race, and change the condition of the world in His sight immediately on Christ's death. The sun did not rise on Easter-day, nor did He rise from the grave, on a new world, but on the old world, the sinful rebellious outcast world as before. Men were just what they had been, both in themselves and in His sight. They were guilty and corrupt before His crucifixion, and so they were after it ; so they remain to this day, except so far as He by His free bounty and at His absolute will vouchsafes to impart the gift of His passion to

this man or that. He provided, not gave salvation, when He suffered ; and there must be a giving or applying in the case of all those who are to be saved. The gift of life is in us, as truly as it is not of us ; it is not only *from* Him but it is *unto* us. This must carefully be borne in mind, for as there are those who consider that life, righteousness, and salvation are of us, so there are others who hold that they are not in us ; and as there are many who more or less forget that justification is of God, so there are quite as many who more or less forget that justification must be in man if it is to profit him. And it is hard to say which of the two errors is the greater.

But there is another ground for saying that Christ did not finish His gracious economy by His death ; viz. because the Holy Spirit came in order to finish it. When He ascended, He did not leave us to ourselves ; so for the work was not done. He sent His Spirit. Were all finished as regards individuals, why should the Holy Ghost have condescended to come ? But the Spirit came to finish in us what Christ had finished in Himself, but left unfinished as regards us. To Him it is committed to apply to us all that Christ had done for us. As then His mission proves on the one hand that salvation is not from ourselves, so does it on the other that it must be wrought in us. For if all gifts of grace are with the Spirit, and the presence of the Spirit is within us, it follows that these gifts are to be manifested and wrought in us. If Christ is our sole hope, and Christ is given to us by the Spirit, and the Spirit be an inward presence, our sole hope is an inward change. As a light placed in a room pours out its rays on all sides, so the presence of the Holy Ghost imbues us with life, strength, holiness, love, acceptableness, righteousness. God looks on us in mercy, because He sees in us "the mind of the Spirit," for whoso has this mind has holiness and righteousness within him. Henceforth all his thoughts, words, and works, as done in the Spirit, are acceptable, pleasing, just before God ; and whatever remaining infirmity there be in him, that the presence of the Spirit hides. That divine influence, which has the fulness of Christ's grace to purify us, has also the power of Christ's blood to justify.

Let us never lose sight of this great and simple view, which the whole of Scripture sets before us. What was actually done by Christ in the flesh eighteen hundred years ago, is in type and resemblance really wrought in us one by one even to the end of time. He was born of the Spirit, and we too are born of the Spirit. He was justified by the Spirit, and so are we. He was pronounced the well-beloved Son, when the Holy Ghost descended on Him ; and we too cry Abba, Father, through the Spirit sent into our hearts. He was led into the wilderness by the Spirit ; He did great works by the Spirit ; He offered Himself

to death by the Eternal Spirit ; He was raised from the dead by the Spirit ; He was declared to be the Son of God by the Spirit of holiness on His resurrection : we too are led by the same Spirit into and through this world's temptations ; we, too, do our works of obedience by the Spirit ; we die from sin, we rise again unto righteousness through the Spirit ; and we are declared to be God's sons,—declared, pronounced, dealt with as righteous,—through our resurrection unto holiness in the Spirit. Or, to express the same great truth in other words ; Christ Himself vouchsafes to repeat in each of us in figure and mystery all that He did and suffered in the flesh. He is formed in us, born in us, suffers in us, rises again in us, lives in us ; and this not by a succession of events, but all at once : for He comes to us as a Spirit, all dying, all rising again, all living. We are ever being born, ever being justified, ever being renewed, dying to sin, rising to righteousness. His whole economy in all its parts is ever in us all at once ; and this divine presence constitutes the title of each of us to heaven ; this is what He will acknowledge and accept at the last day. He will acknowledge Himself,—His image in us,—as though we reflected Him, and He on looking round about, discerned at once who were His ; those, namely, who gave back to Him His image. He impresses us with the seal of the Spirit, in order to avouch that we are His. As the king's image appropriates the coin to him, so the likeness of Christ in us separates us from the world and assigns us over to the kingdom of heaven.

Scripture is full of texts to show that salvation is an inward gift. For instance : What is it that rescues us from being reprobates ? “ Know ye not,” says St. Paul, “ that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.” What is our hope ? “ Christ in us, the hope of glory.” What is it that hallows and justifies ? “ The name of the Lord Jesus, and the Spirit of our God.” What makes our offerings acceptable ? “ Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” What is our life ? “ The Spirit is life because of righteousness.” How are we enabled to fulfil the law ? “ The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Who is it makes us righteous ? “ The fruit of the *Spirit* is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.”*

To conclude.—I have said that there are two opposite errors : one, the holding that salvation is not of God ; the other, that it is not in ourselves. Now it is remarkable that the maintainers of both the one and the other error, whatever their differences in other respects, agree in this,—in depriving a Christian life of its mysteriousness. He who

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Col. i. 27. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rom. xv. 16. Rom. viii. 10. Eph. v. 9.

believes that he can please God of himself, or that obedience can be performed by his own powers, of course has nothing more of awe, reverence, and wonder in his personal religion, than when he moves his limbs and uses his reason, though he might well feel awe then also. And in like manner he also who considers that Christ's passion once undergone on the Cross absolutely secured his own personal salvation, may see mystery indeed in that Cross (as he ought,) but he will see no mystery, and feel little solemnity, in prayer, in ordinances, or in his attempts at obedience. He will be free, familiar, and presuming, in God's presence. Neither will "work out their salvation with fear and trembling;" for neither will realize, though they use the words, that God is in them "to will and to do." Both the one and the other will be content with a low standard of duty : the one, because he does not believe that God requires much ; the other, because he thinks that Christ in His own person has done all. Neither will honour and make much of God's Law : the one, because he brings down the Law to his own power of obeying it ; the other, because he thinks that Christ has taken away the Law by obeying it. They only feel awe and true seriousness who think that the Law remains ; that it claims to be fulfilled by them and that it can be fulfilled in them through the power of God's grace. Not that any man alive rises up to that perfect fulfilment, but that such fulfilment is not impossible ; that it is begun in all true Christians ; that they are tending to it ; are growing unto it ; and are pleasing God because they are, and in proportion as they are, becoming like Him who, when He came on earth in our flesh, fulfilled the Law perfectly.

SERMON XI.

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT.

ROMANS X. 4.

Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

IN his Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul argues against Jews who rejected the Gospel; in his Epistles to the Corinthians, he rebukes Christians who had abused it. The sin of the fickle and vain-glorious Corinthians was very different from that of the hard-hearted Jews; and yet in either case it rose from one and the same root, pride. Both Jews and Greeks prided themselves on what they were, on what Moses had left them, or what Christ's Apostles had brought them; both forgot that it was God's gift, and that it was their duty to be dependent and watchful. But in outward appearance they differed: the Jews seemed to value even God's former mercies too highly; and the Greeks of Corinth thought even of His last and best, lightly and unthankfully.

Sinful feelings and passions generally take upon themselves the semblance of reason, and affect to argue. The Jews, whom St. Paul is opposing in the text, disguised from themselves their own unbelief in this way; and this has turned out a benefit to the Church ever since, as having led St. Paul, in consequence, to set forth views of the Gospel which otherwise might not have come to us with the authority of inspiration. The text contains such a view, expressed very concisely, which I now propose to explain; and after doing so, I will add a few words on the feelings of the Jews, in contrast with the doctrine it contains.

St. Paul tells us that "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Here are three subjects which call for remark: the Law, Righteousness, and Faith. I will speak of them in succession.

I. In the first place, of "the Law." By the Law is meant the eternal unchangeable Law of God, which is the revelation of His will, the standard of perfection, and the mould and fashion to which all crea-

tures must conform, as they would be happy. God is holy, and His Law is holy. His Law is the image of Himself; it is the word of Life and Truth commanding that of which He is the perfect pattern. "Be ye holy," he says, "for I am holy." "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."* His Law is the declaration of His infinite and glorious attributes, and thereby becomes the rule by which all beings imitate, approach and resemble Him. And when He created them, He provided that it should be to them what it ought to be. God loves holiness, and therefore, as became a good and kind Father, He created all His children holy. He created them to be His children, not His enemies; beings in whom He might take pleasure; who might be near Him, not far off from Him; whom He might love and reward. He formed them upon the pattern of the Law; He moulded them into symmetry by means of it. He created man "in His own Image, and after His likeness;" that is, upon the type of the Law. He put His spirit within him, and set up the Law in his heart; so that, what He is in His infinite nature, such was man, such was Adam in a finite nature,—perfect after his kind.

And in this sense, the Law given to the Israelites from Mount Sinai is called in Scripture, and may be considered, the holy and eternal Law of God. Not that any number of commandments, uttered in man's language and written upon tables, could be commensurate with what is of an infinite and of a spiritual nature; not that a code of precepts, addressed to one portion of a fallen race, in one country, and in one particular state of moral and social existence, could rise to the majesty and beauty of what is perfect;—but that the Law of Moses represented the Law of God in its place and age; was the fullest revelation of it, and the nearest approximation to it, then vouchsafed; and was that Law, as far as it went. As Adam, a child of the dust, was also an "image of God;" so the Jewish Law, though earthly and temporary, had at the same time a divine character. It was the light of God shining in a gross medium, in order that it might be "comprehended;" and if it did not teach the chosen people all, it taught them much, and in the only way in which they could be taught it. And hence, as in the text, St. Paul, when on the subject of the Jews, speaks of their Law as if it were the eternal Law of God; and so it was, but only brought down to its hearers, and condescending to their infirmity.

2. Such is "the Law" as spoken of in the text; and by "Righteousness" is meant conformity to the Law,—that one state of soul which is pleasing to God. It is a relative word, having reference to a standard

* 1 Pet i. 16. Matt. v. 48.

set up, and expressing a fulfilment of its requirements. To be righteous is to act up to the Law, whatever the Law be, and thereby to be acceptable to Him who gave it. Such Adam was in Paradise ; the Law was his inward life, and Almighty God dealt with him accordingly,—called, accounted, dealt with him as righteous, because he was righteous.

It was far otherwise with him when he had fallen. He then forfeited the presence of the Holy Spirit ; he no longer fulfilled the Law ; he lost his righteousness, and he knew he had lost it. He knew it before God told him ; he condemned himself, he pronounced himself unrighteous, before God formally rejected him from a state of justification. And in this state he has remained, viewed in himself, ever since ; knowing the Law, but not doing it ; admiring, not loving ; assenting, not following ; not utterly without the Law, yet not with it ; with the Law, not within him, but before him,—not any longer in his heart, as the pillar of a cloud, which was a gracious token and a guide to the Israelites, but departing from him, and moving away, and taking up its place, as it were, over against him, and confronting him, as an enemy, accuser, and avenger. It was a cloud and darkness, instead of a pillar of light ; and from it the Lord looked out upon him, and troubled him. Or in St. Paul's words, "the commandment, which was ordained to life, he found to be unto death."* What had been a law of innocence, became a law of conscience ; what was freedom, became bondage ; what was peace, became dread and misery.

Let us thank God that dread and misery are left us. Better is it that the Law remain to us externally, and in the way of an upbraiding conscience, than that it should be utterly removed. While, and so far as, it so remains, our own judgment upon ourselves is a warning to us, what the judgment of God will be hereafter, what His view of us is at present. For is not the pain of a bad conscience different from any other pain that we know ? I do not ask whether it is greater or less than other pain, but whether it is not unlike any other, peculiar and individual. Can it be compensated and overcome by the wages of sin, whatever they be,—or, rather, does it not, while it lasts, remain distinctly perceptible and entire in the midst of them ? In it, then, we have a figure of the wrath of God upon transgressors of the Law ; the pain which it inflicts on us at times, or in certain cases, is a sort of indication how God regards, and will one day visit, all sins, according to the sure word of Scripture. Take an instance, which, though extreme, will serve to explain what I would say. What accounts we read of the frightful sleepless remorse which murderers have before now shown ! so

* Rom. vii. 10.

much so, that, though no one knew their crime, yet they could not help confessing it,—as if death were a lighter suffering than a bad conscience. Here you see the misery of being unjustified. Or, again, consider the peculiar piercing distress which follows upon the commission of sins of impurity ;—here you have a corroboration in a particular instance of what Scripture affirms generally, concerning the misery of sinning. Or think of those indescribable feelings in our nature, to which our first parent alludes, when he says, “I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself.”* Are not these feelings a type of the horror with which Angels now look, with which we shall look hereafter, upon all transgression of the Law, or unrighteousness ?

Unrighteousness then is a state of misery, frightful as the murderer’s, acute as theirs who follow Belial, and overpowering as Adam’s when he fled from God. And from this state Christ came to save us, by bringing us back again to righteousness. Man was righteous at the first, because the Law of God ruled him ; he became unrighteous when this Law ceased to rule him ; and he becomes righteous again by the Law of God once more ruling him. He was righteous at the first by the presence of the Holy Spirit, which enabled him to obey the Law ; and such too is his second righteousness. And thus the words of the text are fulfilled ; “Christ is the end of the Law for” or unto “righteousness.” He effects what the Law contemplates and enjoins, but cannot accomplish, our righteousness. And how ? St. Paul does not mention it in the text, but in many other places in his Epistles ; viz. by that great gift of His passion, the abiding influence of the Holy Ghost, which enables us to offer to God an acceptable obedience, such as by nature we cannot offer.

Now let me show from Scripture some of these points on which I have been insisting.

First, not much need be said to make it plain that by nature we cannot please God, or, in other words, have no principle of righteousness in us. St. Paul says in so many words, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God ;” and just before, “The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.” In the foregoing chapter he says, “We know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not ; for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I. I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing.” Again, “By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in

* Gen. iii. 10.

His sight ; for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." In like manner the prophet Isaiah says, " We are all as an unclean thing ; and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."* Such is our state by nature ; the best things we do are displeasing to God in themselves, as savouring of the Old Adam, and being works of the flesh and not spiritual.

And as this is our natural state, so the desire of religious men, and the one promise of a merciful God has ever been, that we should be made obedient to the Law, or righteous. Thus David says, " Thou requirest truth *in the inward parts* ; and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly. Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be *whiter than snow*. Make me a *clean heart*, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. O give me the comfort of Thy help again ; and stablish me with Thy free Spirit." Again, " I will wash my hands in *innocency*, O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar." Again " Give me understanding, and I shall keep Thy Law, yea, *I shall keep it with my whole heart* . . . Behold my delight is in Thy commandments. O quicken me in Thy righteousness." " Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee ; for Thou art my God : let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of *righteousness*."†

And what Psalmists ask, Prophets promise. They make it the one great distinction of Gospel times, that that original righteousness which is so necessary for us, and from which we are so far gone, should be vouchsafed again to us, and that through the Spirit. Daniel states the object of Christ's coming to be the " making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting *righteousness*." Malachi says that Christ should " purify the sons of Levi" that they may " offer unto the Lord an offering in *righteousness*." In Isaiah Almighty God speaks to them " That know *righteousness*," viz. " the people in whose heart is *My law* ;" and he also speaks of " the *Spirit* being poured upon us from on high," and in consequence of "*righteousness* remaining in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness being *peace*, and the effect of righteousness, *quietness and assurance* for ever." Still more clear is the prophet Jeremiah in declaring what the Gospel gift consists in ; " Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah : I will *put My law in their inward parts*, and write it in their hearts." In similar terms does the prophet Ezekiel describe the great gift of the Gospel, " *A new heart* also will I give you, and a *new spirit* will I put within you ; and I

* Rom. viii. 7, 8 ; vii. 14, 15, 18 ; iii. 20. Is. lxiv. 6.

† Ps. li. 6, 7, 10, 12 ; xxvi. 6 ; cxix. 30, 40 ; cxliii. 10.

will put *My spirit* within you, and *cause you* to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." Again, elsewhere the prophet Isaiah calls this new nature, or righteousness, or gift of the Spirit, which the Gospel furnishes, a sort of garment or robe of the soul, being that glory which Adam had before sin stripped him of it; "He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation, He hath covered me with *the robe of righteousness*, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." With this passage must be compared St. John's words in the Revelation, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; *for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints*." Our Lord also speaks of the great gift of the Gospel under the same figure, when He tells us of the man who came to the marriage feast without a wedding-garment, that is, without righteousness or holiness.*

Thus, if we listen to the voices of the prophets, we must believe that the righteousness of the Law really is fulfilled in us under the Gospel through the Spirit;—but as this is a truth in this day denied by some persons, it may be well to insist upon it.

Now that it is a plain truth of Scripture, is proved, in addition to what has been said, by those numerous passages which speak of holy men as "*righteous before God*." This is an expression to which we shall do well to attend, as being an additional explanation of the word "righteousness;" for if holy men are *righteous before God*, they come up to God's *standard* of perfection. The phrase "in the sight of" or "before" often occurs in Scripture, and it means "*in the judgment*," "*with the witness*" of him or them to whom it is applied. Thus, in the last chapter of St. Luke, where it is said, "Their words seemed to them as idle tales," this stands in the original Greek, "Their words seemed *in their sight*" or "*before them*," that is, "*in their judgment*." And hence when St. Paul speaks with an oath, he uses these words, "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, *before God*, I lie not," that is "with the *witness* of God." And so Peter and John answer the council, "Whether it be right *in the sight of God* to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," *i. e.* "in the *presence*" and "with the *witness* of God." And hence the Angels are said "to stand in the *presence* of God," or to be "before His throne," for they can bear it. And on the other hand, the prodigal son says, "Father, I have sinned *before thee*," that is, I know that thou art conscious of my sin. When then it is said, as it so often is said in Scripture, that the righteous are righteous "*before God*," this means that their righteousness is not

* Dan. ix. 24. Mal. iii. 3. Is. li. 7; xxxii. 15, 16, 17. Jer xxxi. 31. Ez* xxxvi. 26, 27. Is. lxi. 10. Rev. xix. 7, 8.

merely the name or semblance of righteousness, nor righteousness up to an earthly standard, but a real and true righteousness which approves itself to God. They are able to stand before God and yet not be condemned. They are not sinners before God, but they are righteous before God, and bear His scrutiny. By nature no one can stand in His presence. "All the world becomes guilty *before God*." "By the deeds of the Law no flesh shall be justified in *His sight*!" How then are we able to come before Him? How shall we stand in His sight? The answer is given us in the Old Testament, in the words of Balaam to Balak. Balak asked, "Wherewith shall I *come before the Lord*, and bow myself before the High God?" and the answer was, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Or again, the answer may be given in the word of Zacharias, who blesses the Lord God of Israel for fulfilling His promise, and enabling us to come into His presence to "serve Him *without fear*, in holiness and righteousness *before Him*." And accordingly, to come to the case of individuals, Noah, even before the Gospel times, is said to have "found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Why? Because, in the words of Almighty God to him, "*Thee* have I seen righteous *before Me*," or, in My sight, "in this generation;" and Daniel escaped the lions, "forasmuch as *before God* innocency was found in him." In like manner Zacharias and Elizabeth "were both righteous *before God*," or in the judgment of God. It was told Cornelius that "his prayers and alms had come up for a memorial *in the sight*," or judgment, of God. And St. Paul speaks of intercession for governors being "good and acceptable *in the sight* of God our Saviour." And he prays for his brethren that God would "work *in* them that which is well pleasing in *His sight*," or judgment. St. Peter too speaks of a "meek and quiet spirit," being, "in the *sight of God*, of great price." And St. John, that "we receive what we ask of Him, because we do those things that are pleasing *in His sight*." And hence Christ warns the Church of Sardis, to be "watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die;" for, He says, "I have not found thy works perfect *before God*," or in the witness of God. And accordingly the word "witness" is itself used elsewhere to express the same thing, as in the instance of Abel, who, St. Paul says, by his "more excellent sacrifice," "*obtained witness* that he was righteous; God testifying of his gifts."* If then it is plain from Scripture, as it

* Luke xxiv. 11. Gal. i. 20. Acts iv. 19. Luke i. 19. Rev. viii. 2; 1. 5. Rom iii. 19. Mic. vi. 8. Luke i. 74, 75. Gen. vii. 1. Dan. vi. 22. Luke i. 6. Acts x. 4. 1 Tim. ii. 3. Heb. xiii. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 4. 1 John iii. 22. Rev. iii. 2. Heb. xi. 4.

is, that by nature we are unrighteous in God's sight, and cannot stand before God, the same Scripture also proves that by the gift of grace we *are* righteous, and can stand before Him; and it as easy, by some evasion, to explain away the Scripture proofs for the doctrine of original sin, as those which Scripture furnishes us for the doctrine of implanted righteousness, and that through the Spirit.

St. Paul has a number of other passages concerning the office of the Holy Spirit, which are equally apposite to show that He it is who vouchsafes to give us inward righteousness under the Gospel, or to justify, or make us acceptable to God. For instance, he says, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are *justified* in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the *Spirit* of our God. Elsewhere he first calls the Gospel "the ministration of the *Spirit*," and in the next verse, "the ministration of righteousness." Elsewhere he speaks of the Holy Ghost as "the Spirit of *adoption*." And he intimates that "the *righteousness* of the Law" is "*fulfilled*" in those "who walk after the *Spirit*." Again he says that the presence of the Spirit in us pleads, as it were, for us with the Father, "making intercession for us with plaints unutterable;" and that God, "who searcheth the hearts," "*knoweth* what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints, according," or, in a way acceptable, "to God." And elsewhere he contrasts the state of nature and the state of grace in this plain way, clearly implying that that inward gift of righteousness which we lost in Adam we have recovered in Christ; "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of *life*. For *as* by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, *so* by the obedience of One shall many be *made righteous* . . . that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."* Sin, which we derive through Adam, is not a name merely, but a dreadful reality; and so our new righteousness also is a real and not a merely imputed righteousness. It is real righteousness, because it comes from the Holy and Divine Spirit, who vouchsafes, in our Church's language, to pour His gift into our hearts, and who thus makes us acceptable to God; as by nature, on account of original sin, we are displeasing to Him. We are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," and therefore in a state of *grace*. Again, St. Paul speaks of the "offering of the Gentiles being *acceptable*." How acceptable? He proceeds, "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." He speaks of presenting our "bodies as a living sacrifice

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 8. 9. Gal. iv. 5, 6. Rom. viii. 26, 27; v. 18—21.

holy, *acceptable* unto God." He says that Christ has "saved us, according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," and that we are able thereby to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all *pleasing*."*

Such then is the meaning of the words of the text, "Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness." As if the Apostle said, Would you fulfil the righteousness of the Law? You cannot in your own strength. You cannot without that divine gift which His passion has purchased, the gift of the Spirit; with it "the righteousness of the Law *may* be fulfilled in you." Christ then is the end of the Law for righteousness, because He effects the purpose of the Law. He brings that about which "the Law cannot do, because it is weak through the flesh," through our own unregenerate, unrenewed, carnal nature.

3. But here this question may be asked,—“How can we be said to *fulfil* the Law, and to offer an *acceptable* obedience, since we do not obey *perfectly*? At best we only obey in part; the best obedience of ours is sullied with imperfection. Even with the gift of the Spirit, we do nothing which will bear the strict inspection of a holy and just Judge. Adam, on the other hand, had no sinful nature at all, before his fall; there was nothing in him to counteract or to defile the influences of grace. He then might be justified by his inward righteousness, but we cannot.”

I answer as follows:—We can only be justified, certainly, by what is perfect; no work of ours, as far as it is ours, is perfect: and, therefore by no work of ours, viewed in its human imperfections, are we justified. But when I speak of our righteousness, I speak of the work of the Spirit, and this work, though imperfect, considered as ours, is perfect as far as it comes from Him. Our works, done in the Spirit of Christ, have a justifying *principle* in them, and that is the presence of the All-holy Spirit. His influences are infinitely pleasing to God, and able to overcome in His sight all our own infirmities and demerits. This we are expressly told by St. Paul, in reference to one work of the Holy Ghost, the exercise of prayer, as I just now quoted his words. “He that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the Saints,” that is, in their hearts, “according to God.”† Not then for any thing of our own are we acceptable to God, but for the work of grace in us; and as having this work of grace in us we *are* acceptable. And this Divine Presence in us, makes us altogether pleasing to God. It makes those works pleasing to God, which it produces, though human infirmity be mixed with

* Rom. xv. 16; xii. 1. Tit. iii. 5. Col. i. 10.

† Rom. viii. 27.

them : it hallows those acts, that life, that obedience of which it is the original cause, and which it orders and fashions ; so that our new obedience or righteousness is justifying, though imperfect, not for its own sake, but for this new and heavenly principle of grace infused into it.

But again, there is another reason why, for Christ's sake, we are dealt with as perfectly righteous, though we be not so. Not only for the Spirit's presence in us, but for what is ours ;—not indeed what is now ours, but for what we shall be. We are not unreprouable, and unblemished in holiness yet, but we shall be at length through God's mercy. They who persevere to the end, will be perfect in soul and body, when they stand before God in heaven ; and now that perfection is beginning in them, now they have a gift in them which will in due time, through God's mercy, leaven the whole mass within them. They will one day be presented blameless before the Throne, and they are now to labour towards, and begin that perfect state. And in consideration that it is begun in them, God of His great mercy imputes it to them as if it were already completed. He anticipates what will be, and treats them as that which they are labouring to become. This is what is meant by faith being imputed for righteousness, which St. Paul often insists on, and which is implied in the last words of the text, which I have not yet explained. “ Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to *every one that believeth.*” Faith is the element of all perfection ; he who begins with faith, will end in unspotted and entire holiness. It is the earnest of a great deal more than itself, and therefore is allowed, in God's consideration, to stand for, to be a pledge of, to be taken in advance for, that which it for certain will end in. He who believes has not yet perfect righteousness and unblameableness, but he has the first fruits of it. And all through a man's life, whether his righteous deeds be more or less, or his righteousness of heart more or less, his faith is something quite distinct from any thing he had in a state of nature, and though it does not satisfy the requirements of God's law, yet since it tends to perfection, it is mercifully taken as perfection. “ Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,” because God, who sees the end from the beginning, knew it would end in perfect and unblemished righteousness. And in like manner to us “ it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.”*

4. Lastly, such being the Law, such our righteousness, such the work of Christ in us through the Spirit, and such the office of faith,

* Rom. iv. 24, 25.

we see what the mistake of the Jews was, of which so much is said in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and which seems to be the reason why the text itself was written. They were in a path which never would lead to holiness and heaven. They were in a state which was destitute of grace and help. They were under the threatening and condemning Law. Many good men doubtless there had been, and were under the Law, but their spiritual excellence was not from the Law, but from the Gospel, the blessings of which were anticipated under it, and which the Apostle was at that time preaching throughout the world. But the Pharisees and others, not understanding the real nature and office of their Law, and the reason why God had given it through Moses, thought to be saved by it,—thought it led to heaven. Whereupon St. Paul attempted to show them that they were, as I may say, in the wrong road. They aimed at eternal life; that was the object towards which they professed to be travelling. Now St. Paul told them that the Jewish Law did not lead to it. He said that if they desired to reach the eternal rest of heaven, they must betake themselves to another road. And that they could not, as it were, cross over into it, but that they must go back and enter in at the gate, and that this gate was faith. He said that the further they went on in their present course, the less they would really advance towards their object; and though it seemed lost time going back, it was not so. They might do as many works and services as they would in their present state, but these would not advance them at all, and why? Not that works were not necessary, God forbid! but that such works were not good works; that no works were good works but those done in the Spirit, and that nothing could gain them the gift of the Spirit but faith in Christ. They desired to be righteous; it was well; but Christ alone was “the end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believed.” They desired to fulfil the Law; well then, let them seek “the Law of the Spirit of life,” whereby “the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in them.” They desired the reward of righteousness: be it so; let them then “wait through the Spirit for the hope of righteousness by faith.”* But they were too proud to confess that they had any thing to learn, to begin again, to submit to be taught, to believe in Him they had crucified, to come suppliantly for the gift of the Spirit. They refused the true righteousness which God had provided, thinking they were righteous as they were, and that they could be saved in the flesh. Hence St. Paul says, “They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”† They thought that faith was

* Gal. v. 5.

† Rom. x. 3.

something mean and weak, so it was ; and, therefore, that it was unable to do great things, so it was not ; for Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness, and He has chosen the despicable things of this world to put to shame such as are highly esteemed. They considered that they were God's people by a sort of right, that they did not need grace, and that their outward ceremonies and their dead works would profit them. Therefore the Apostle warned them, that Abraham himself was justified, not by circumcision, but by faith ; that circumcision was not taken for righteousness in his case, for it never would arrive at righteousness, but that faith would arrive, and therefore it was taken ; that "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness ;"* that "by grace are we saved through faith, not of works, for we are *God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works ;*"† that "if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."‡ However, the Jews still preferred their old works to good works ; they refused to go the way by which alone their persons, thoughts, words, actions, services could be made acceptable to God ; they would not exercise that loving faith which alone could gain for them the gift of the Spirit, and was fruitful in true righteousness ; they refused to be justified in God's way, and determined to use the Law of Moses for a purpose for which it was never given, for their justification in His sight, and for attaining eternal life.

And in consequence God turned from them, and gave to others what was first offered to them. He manifested Himself to the Gentiles. Those who had hitherto been without any tokens of God's favour, outstripped in the race those who had long enjoyed it. The first became last, and the last first. "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith ; but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were, by the works of the Law ; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone."§

Let us see to it, lest in any way we too stumble at God's commands or promises ; let us beg of Him to lead us on in His perfect and narrow way, and to be "a lantern to our feet, and a light to our path," while we walk in it.

* Rom. iv. 5. † Eph. ii. 8—10. ‡ Rom. xi. 6. § Rom. xi. 30—32.

SERMON XII.

THE NEW WORKS OF THE GOSPEL.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 17.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are past away ; behold, all things are become new.

Nothing is more clearly stated, or more strongly insisted on, by St. Paul, than the new creation, or second beginning, or regeneration, of the world, which has been vouchsafed in Christ. It had been announced in prophecy. "Behold, I create *new* heavens and a *new* earth ; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." Again : "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be My people." And again : "A *new* heart will I give you, and a *new* spirit will I put within you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."* In the text, St. Paul declares the fulfilment of these promises in the Gospel. "If any man be in Christ, he is a *new* creature ; *old things are past away*," as the heavens and earth shall pass away, at the end of the world : "behold, all things are become *new*." And hence He calls Christ, not only "the Image of the Invisible God," but also "the *first-born* of every creature ;" or, as He calls Himself in the Book of Revelation, "the *beginning* of the creation of God."† St. Paul also speaks of "the *new* and living way which He hath consecrated for us through His flesh ;" of Christians having "put off the old man with his deeds," and having "put on the *new* man, which is renewed in knowledge,

* Isa. lxy. 17. Jer. xxxi. 31. 33. Ez. xxxvi. 26, 7.

† Col. i. 15. Rev. iii. 14.

after the Image of Him that created him ;” of “*newness* of life,” and “*newness* of spirit ;” of “ministers of the *New* Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit ;” and of our being God’s “workmanship *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works.”* Elsewhere he says, that true and availing “circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God ;” and that “circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping the commandments of God.”†

Now it may be asked, Is there not some contrariety in these statements ? The Gospel is said to be a *new* covenant, and yet, after all, it is to consist in “walking in God’s statutes,” and “doing His judgments,” and “keeping His commandments,” and being “created unto good works.” Now these were but the terms of the old covenant : “Fear God and keep His commandments ;” “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” “The man that doeth those things shall live by them.”‡ If the new covenant be of works, too, how is the Gospel other than the Law ? how can it justly be called new ? If the way of salvation be now what it ever has been, how are we gainers ? What privilege is there in being brought under the Gospel ? What has Christ done for us ? Hence some persons have concluded that salvation under the Gospel is not of works ; and in confirmation of this they urge, that St. Paul elsewhere speaks expressly of salvation as being not of works but of faith ; and they allege that faith *is* a new way of salvation, though works of obedience are not and cannot be.

Now there can be no doubt at all that salvation is by faith, and that its being by faith is one of those special circumstances which make the Gospel a new covenant ; but still it may be by works also ; for, to use a familiar illustration, obedience is the *road* to heaven, and faith the *gate*. Those who attempt to be saved simply without works, are like persons who should attempt to travel to a place, not along the road, but across the fields. If we wish to get to our journey’s end, we shall keep to the road ; but even then we may go the *wrong* road. This was the case with the Jews. They professed to go along the road of works,—they did not wander into the fields,—so far well : but they took the wrong road. That particular road of which faith is the gate, that particular obedience, those particular works, which commence in faith, these are the only right and sure road to heaven. It is wrong to leave the road for the open country ; again, it is wrong to go along the wrong road ;—but it is not wrong to go along the right road. And in like

* Heb. x. 20. Col. iii. 9, 10. Rom. vi. 4 ; vii. 6. 2 Cor. iii. 6. Eph. ii. 10.

† Rom. ii. 29. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

‡ Eccles. xii. 13. Rom. x. 5.

manner it is sinful to attempt no obedience whatever ; it is blind perversity to attempt obedience by the Jewish law or the law of nature ; but it is not sinful, it is not perverse, it is nothing else than wisdom, nothing elsethan true godliness, to follow after that obedience which is of faith.

The illustration may be pursued further. A road may want repairing,—it may get worse and worse as we go on, till it ceases to be a road : it may fall off from a road into a lane, from a lane to a path, or a wild heath, or a marsh ; or be cut off by high impassable mountains ; so that a person who attempts that way will never arrive at his journey's end. This was the case with the works of the Law by which the Jews thought to gain heaven,—this is the case with all works done in our natural strength ; they are like a road over fens or precipices, which is sure to fail us. At first we might seem to go on well, but we should find at length that we made no progress. We should never get to our journey's end. Our best obedience in our own strength is worth nothing ; it is altogether unsound, it is ever failing, it never grows firmer, it never can be reckoned on, it does nothing well, it has nothing in it pleasing or acceptable to God :—and not only so, it is the obedience of souls born and living under God's wrath, for a state of nature is a state of wrath. On the other hand, obedience which is done in faith is done with the aid of the Holy Spirit ; it is holy and acceptable in God's sight ; it grows habitual and consistent ; it tends to possess the soul wholly ; and it leads straight onward to heaven. This was the very promise of the Gospel as the Prophet Isaiah announces it. “A highway shall be there and a way, and it shall be called the *way of holiness* : the unclean shall not pass over it . . . the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.”* This being understood, we shall have no difficulty in understanding St. Paul's language. The way of salvation is by works, as under the Law, but it is by “works which spring out of faith,” and which come of “the inspiration of the Spirit.” It is because works are living and spiritual, from the heart, and by faith, that the Gospel is a new covenant. Hence, in the passages above quoted, we are told again and again of “the law *in our inward parts* ;” “a new *heart* ;” “a new *spirit* ;” the Holy “*Spirit within us* ;” “newness of *life*,” and “circumcision of the *heart* in the Spirit.” And hence St. Paul says, that though we have not been “saved by works,” yet we are “*created* unto good works ;” and that “the blood of Christ purges the conscience from *dead* works to *serve* the *living* God.”† Salvation then is not by dead works, but by living works. The Jews could but do dead works ; but Christians can do good and spiritual works. The

* Isa. xxxv. 8.

† Heb. ix. 14.

Gospel covenant, then, is both a new way and not a new way. It is not a new way seeing it is *in* works : it is a new way in that it is *by* faith. It is, as St. Paul words it, the "obedience of faith ;"—new because of faith, old because obedience.

And thus there is no opposition between St. Paul and St. James. St. James says, that justification is by works, and St. Paul that it is by faith : but, observe, St. James does not say that it is by dead or Jewish works ; he mentions expressly both faith and works ; he only says, "not faith only, but works also :"—and St. Paul is far from denying it is by works ; he only says that it is by faith, and denies that it is by *dead* works. And what proves this, among other circumstances, is, that he never calls those works, which he condemns and puts aside, *good* works, but simply works : whenever he speaks of good works in his Epistles, he speaks of Christian works ; not of Jewish. On the whole, then, salvation is both by faith and by works. St. James says, not *dead* faith, and St. Paul, not *dead* works. St. James, "not by faith *only*," for that *would* be dead faith : St. Paul, "not by works only," for such *would* be dead works. Faith alone can make works living ; works alone can make faith living. Take away either, and you take away both ;—he alone has faith who has works,—he alone has works who has faith.

It is not at all wonderful, then, that though the way of salvation under the Gospel is new, still in certain respects it is still what the Jews, nay, and what the heathen thought it to be. The way of justification has in all religions been by means of works,—so it is under the Gospel ; but in the Gospel alone is it by means of good works.

However, this statement, simple and obvious as it is, is a hard saying to many persons, who think that the way of salvation should be altogether new under the Gospel, altogether different from what is prescribed under other religions ; whereas they think little has been gained for us by Christ, if, after all, He has left us, as before, to be saved by obedience. This is a difficulty with them. They think Christianity is made Jewish, or almost heathen, if salvation is attained by what is the old way ; and this being the case, I shall make some remarks, with the hope of reconciling the mind to it.

I observe, then, that whether it came from Noah after the flood or not, so it is, that all religions, the various heathen religions as well as the Mosaic religion, have many things in them which are very much the same. They seem to come from one common origin, and so far have the traces of truth upon them. They are all branches, though they are corruptions and perversions, of that patriarchal religion which came from God. And of course the Jewish religion came entirely and im-

mediately from God. Now God's works are like each other, not different ; if, then, the Gospel is from God, and the Jewish religion was from God, and the various heathen religions in their first origin were from God, it is not wonderful, rather it is natural, that they should have in many ways a resemblance one with another. And, accordingly, that the gospel is in certain points like the religions which preceded it, is but an argument that "God is One, and that there is none other but He ;"—the difference being, that the heathen religions are a true religion corrupted ; the Jewish, a true religion dead ; and Christianity, the true religion living and perfect. The heathen thought to be saved by works, so did the Jews, so do Christians ; but the heathen took the works of darkness for good works ; the Jews thought cold, formal, and scanty works to be good works, and Christians believe that works done in the Spirit of grace, the fruit of faith, and offered up under the meritorious intercession of Christ, that these only are good works, but that these are good :—so that while the heathen thinks to be saved by sin, and the Jew by self, the Christian relies on the Spirit of Him who died on the cross for him. Thus they differ ; but they all agree in thinking that works are the means of salvation ; they differ in respect to the quality of these works.

Let us take some parallel instances in religious doctrine and worship, for they abound.

1. For example : Religion, considered in itself, cannot but have much which is the same in all systems, true and false. It is the worship of God. This involves saying prayers, postures of devotion, and the like, whatever the particular worship be ; nor is the Gospel less a new covenant, because it retains these old usages, unless it ceases to be new, because it retains religion. While man is man, it could not be otherwise. These observances are right when performed well, evil when performed ill ; evil as performed by the heathen, right as performed by Christians. The heathen worship devils, as St. Paul tells us. As is their god, such is their service. The Gospel came to destroy the worship of devils, not to destroy worship ; we do not cease to have a new worship, because we worship, not devils, but Almighty God.

2. Again, meetings for worship have been in all religions, from the first. But it does not follow from this that "old things" have not been made to pass away till coming to church is denounced as a sin. On the contrary, St. Paul expressly tells us *not* to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, though "all things have become new." What had been done of old time for bad purposes or in a bad way, is to be done for a holy purpose and in a heavenly way under the Gospel. A new life is infused into what once was evil, or at least profitless ; so

that, whereas of old time men came together to worship as "dry bones," in consequence of the creative power of Christ, "the dead bones live."

3. Again, religion has ever existed in a large organized body, with orders and officers, with ministers and people. It has always exercised an influence over the State, and it has ever been what is called established, or had rank and property. Now there is abundant evidence that this was intended to be the condition of religion under the Gospel, in spite of its being a new religion. Ranks existed from the first,—Apostles, Evangelists, Prophets, Bishops, and Deacons, as we read in Scripture. And property was held by the Church, for the rich gave up their wealth, and laid it at the Apostles' feet. And St. Paul used his privilege as a citizen of Rome. Here again, then, though salvation be of faith, and religion be spiritual, and old things be passed away, and all things become new, yet the old framework remains as far as this, that there are men set apart to preach the Gospel, and that they "live by the Gospel."

4. Again, all religions, before the Gospel came, had their mysteries; I mean alleged disclosures, which could not be fully understood all at once, if at all, and which were open to some more than to others. The Gospel, though it be light and liberty, has not materially altered things here. It has mysteries, as we all know; such as the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. And these mysteries cannot be equally entered into by all, but in proportion as men are humble and holy, and intellectually gifted, and blessed with leisure. St. Paul speaks of "the hidden wisdom," and declares that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And elsewhere he declines to speak to the Hebrews about Melchizedec, "of whom" he had "many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing" they were "dull of hearing."*

5. Again, religions before Christ came ever had holy days and festivals, both among heathen and Jews. The Gospel has not done away with holy days, only it has changed them, and made them more holy. For instance, it has not destroyed the Feast of one day in seven, or the Lord's day; not to mention other instances. This is the more remarkable, because St. Paul's words are at first sight very strong against the observance, under the Gospel, of any days above others, as a matter of religion. He finds fault with the Galatians because they observed "days, and months, and times, and years." And he bids the Colos-

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. Heb. v. 11.

sians not to let any man "judge them in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ."* Who would not, at first sight, suppose from these words, that all holy days, all holy seasons, were to be done away, under the Gospel, as mere shadows,—Sunday, Christmas-day, Easter-tide, Lent, and all the rest? Yet it is not so. The Apostles in the Acts, and St. John in the Revelation, observe and recognize the Lord's day as a Gospel festival. Jewish days *are* shadows, but Christian are not; just as Jewish works, or works of the Law, avail not, but Christian works avail. The weekly festival is not one of the "old things" which "have passed away" in Christ, neither have righteous works. The Sabbath has "become new" by becoming the Lord's day; works become new, by becoming spiritual.

6. Again, washing with water was a heathen rite of purification, and also a Jewish rite. Yet it remains under the Gospel; and with the same change. The "divers washings" of the Jews were "carnal ordinances;"† but Baptism, our washing, is a washing of the Spirit; and because the former are annulled, it does not follow that the latter should be. On the contrary, our Lord distinctly commanded His Apostles, "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them."‡

7. Once more. The heathen had temples; the Jews had a temple; and our Lord said to the Samaritan woman, that the hour was coming when the true worshippers should worship, not in the temple at Jerusalem, but "in spirit and in truth." But this did not mean that there were to be no Christian temples or churches, as we call them; at least it has never been taken so to mean. All it would seem to mean is, that the Jewish temple is not like a Christian temple, but differs in some essential points.

I have said enough to explain St. Paul's statement in the text, that "old things are passed away," and "all things new" under the Gospel. By all things being "*new*" is meant that they are *renewed*; by "*old things passing away*" is meant that they are *changed*. The substance remains; the form, mode, quality, and circumstances are different and more excellent. Religion has still forms, ordinances, precepts, mysteries, duties, assemblies, festivals, and temples as of old time; but, whereas all these were dead and carnal before, now, since Christ came, they have a life in them. He has brought life to the world; He has given life to religion; He has made every thing spiritual and true by His touch, full of virtue, full of grace, full of power:

* Gal. iv. 10. Col. ii. 16, 17.

† Heb. ix. 10.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 19.

so that ordinances, works, forms, which before were unprofitable, now by the inward meritorious influence of His blood imparted to them, avail for our salvation.

This one point, in addition, is clear from what has been said ; that if all Christian worship is "in spirit and in truth," nothing has a place under the Gospel which is *not* spiritual. It is very inconsistent then, to say, as some people do say, that Baptism should be observed, and yet that it does not convey Divine grace, and is a mere outward ordinance ; for if so, it is nothing better than a Jewish rite, and, instead of being observed, it ought to be abolished altogether. And again, unless the Church itself, and the ministerial order attached to it, be a means of grace and the instrument of the Holy Ghost, they are no better than the Jewish temple and the Jewish priests, which have come to nought, and have no part in the spiritual system of the Gospel. And so, in like manner, works of obedience also, if they are no better than "the works of the Law," which cannot justify ; if they are not pleasing to God ; if they be filthy rags, as some persons say, and as the works of nature, *are* ; if so, then I do not see that they need be attempted at all ; for all works of the Law are done away. Every thing is done away in the Gospel but what is spirit and truth ; and our works, our ordinances, our discipline, are spirit and truth, or they are done away.

And, lastly, hereby we see why justification must be of faith : because, as Christ, by means of his Spirit, makes a new beginning in us, so faith, on our part, receives that new beginning, and co-operates with Him. And it is the only principle which can do this : for as things spiritual are unseen, so faith is in its very nature that which apprehends and uses things unseen. We renounce our old unprofitable righteousness, which is from Adam, and accept, through faith, that new righteousness which is imparted by the Spirit ; or, in St. Paul's words, "we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

To conclude. Let us think much, and make much, of the grace of God ; let us beware of receiving it in vain ; let us pray God to prosper it in our hearts, that we may bring forth much fruit. We see how grace wrought in St. Paul : it made him labour, suffer, and work righteousness almost above man's nature. This was not his own doing ; it was not through his own power. He says himself, "Yet not I, but the grace of God which was in me." God's grace was "sufficient" for him. It was its triumph in him, that it made him quite another man from what he was before. May God's grace be efficacious in us also. Let us aim at doing nothing in a dead way ; let us beware of dead works, dead forms, dead professions. Let us pray to be filled with the spirit of love. Let us come to Church joyfully ; let us partake the Holy Communion ador-

ingly ; let us pray sincerely ; let us work cheerfully ; let us suffer thankfully ; let us throw our heart into all we think, say, and do ; and may it be a spiritual heart ! This is to be a new creature in Christ ; this is to walk by faith.

SERMON XIII.

THE STATE OF SALVATION.

EPHESIANS iv. 24.

That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

THESE words express very strongly a doctrine which is to be found in every part of the New Testament, that the Gospel covenant is the means of introducing us into a state of life so different from that in which we were born, and should otherwise continue, that it may not unfitly be called a new creation. As that which is created differs from what is not yet created, so the Christian differs from the natural man. He is brought into a new world, and, as being in that new world, is invested with powers and privileges which he absolutely had not in the way of nature. By nature, his will is enslaved to sin, his soul is full of darkness, his conscience is under the wrath of God ; peace, hope, love, faith, purity, he has not ; nothing of heaven is in him ; nothing spiritual ; nothing of light and life. But in Christ all these blessings are given : the will and the power ; the heart and the knowledge ; the light of faith, and the obedience of faith. As far as a being can be changed without losing his identity, as far as it is sense to say that an existing being can be new created, so far has man this gift when the grace of the Gospel has its perfect work and its maturity of fruit in him. A brute differs less from a man, than does man left to himself, with his natural corruption allowed to run its course, differ from man fully formed and perfected by the habitual indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, in the text, the Apostle speaks of the spiritual state which

Christ has brought us, as being a "new creature in righteousness and true holiness." Elsewhere, he says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Elsewhere, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Elsewhere, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Elsewhere, "We are buried with Him by baptism into death; that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."*

What then is this new state in which a Christian finds himself. compared with the state of nature? It is worth the inquiry.

Now, first, there ought to be no difficulty in our views about it so far as this: that there is a certain new state, and that a state of salvation; and that Christ came to bring into it all whom He had chosen out of the world. Christ "gave Himself for our sins (says St. Paul,) that He might deliver us from the present evil world." He "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." He came "to gather together in one the children of God, which are scattered abroad." "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God."† This is most clear. There can be no doubt at all that there is a certain state of grace now vouchsafed to us, who are born in sin and the children of wrath; such, that those who are to be saved hereafter, are (to speak generally) those, and those only, who are placed in that saving state here. I am not going on to the question, whether or not there is a visible Church; but I insist only on this, that it has not seemed fit to Almighty God to transplant His elect at once from this world and from a state of nature to the eternal happiness of heaven. He does not suffer them to die as they were born, and then, on death, change them outwardly and inwardly; but He brings them into a saving state here, preparatory to heaven;—a state which the Catechism calls a "state of salvation;" and which St. Luke denotes, when he says "The Lord added daily to the Church such as should be saved;"‡ that is, persons called to salvation, placed in a saving state.

No one ought to deny this; though in this day, when all kinds of error abound, some persons seem to have taken up a notion that the world was fully reconciled all at once by Christ's death at the very time of it, and wholly transferred into a state of acceptance; so that there is no new state necessary now for those who shall ultimately be

* 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. xii. 2. Col. iii. 3. Rom. vi. 4.

† Gal. i. 4. Col. i. 13. John xi. 52; i. 12.

‡ Acts ii. 47.

benefited by it; that they have but to do their duty, and they will be rewarded accordingly; whereas it does certainly appear, from such texts of Scripture as have been quoted, that there is a certain state, or kingdom of Christ, into which all must enter here who shall be saved hereafter. We cannot attain to heaven hereafter, without being in this new kingdom here; we cannot escape from the miseries and horrors of the Old Adam, except by being brought into this kingdom, as into an asylum, and there remaining.

And further, this new state is one of "righteousness and true holiness," as the text speaks. Christ brings us into it by coming to us through His Spirit; and, as His Spirit is holy, we are holy, if we are in the state of grace. Christ is present in that heart which He visits with His grace. So that to be in His kingdom is to be in righteousness, to live in obedience, to breathe, as it were, an atmosphere of truth and love.

Now it is necessary to insist upon this also: for here again some men go wrong; and while they go so far as to acknowledge that there is a new state, or kingdom, into which souls must be brought, in order to salvation, yet consider it as a state, not of holiness and righteousness, but merely or mainly of acceptance with God. It has been maintained by some persons, that human nature, even when regenerate, is not, and cannot be, really holy; nay, that it is idle to suppose that, even with the aid of the Holy Spirit, it can do any thing really good in any degree; that our best actions are sins; and that we are always sinning, not only in slighter matters, but so as to need pardon, in all we do, in the same sense in which we needed it when we were as yet unregenerate; and, consequently, that it is vain to try to be holy and righteous, or, rather, that it is presumptuous.

Now, of course it is plain, that even the best of men are full of imperfections and failings; so far is undeniable. But, consider, by nature we are in a state of death. Now is this the state of our hearts under the Gospel? Surely not; for, while "to be carnally minded is death," "to be spiritually minded is life and peace." I mean, that the state of salvation in which we stand is not one in which "our righteousnesses are" what the Prophet calls "filthy rags," but one in which we can help sinning unto death,—can help sinning in the way men do sin when left in a state of nature. If we do so sin, we *cease* to be in that state of salvation: we fall back into a state resembling our original state of wrath, and must pass back again from wrath to grace (if so be), as we best may, in such ways as God has appointed; whereas it is not an uncommon notion, at this time, that a man may be an habitual sinner, and yet be in a state of salvation, and in the kingdom of grace. And this doctrine many more persons hold than think they do; not in words,

but in heart. They think that faith is all in all ; that faith, if they have it, blots out their sins as fast as they commit them. They sin in distinct acts in the morning,—their faith wipes all out ; at noon,—their faith still avails ; and in the evening,—still the same. Or they remain contentedly in sinful habits or practices, under the dominion of sin, not warring against it, in ignorance what is sin and what is not ; and they think that the only business of a Christian is, not to be holy, but to have faith, and to think and speak of Christ ; and thus, perhaps, they are really living, whether by habit or by act, in extortion, avarice, envy, rebellious pride, self-indulgence, or worldliness, and neither know nor care to know it. If they sin in habits, they are not aware of these at all ; if by acts, instead of viewing them one and all together, they take them one by one, and set their faith against each separate act. So far has this been carried, that some men of name in the world have, before now, laid it down as a great and high principle, that there is no mortal sin but one, and that is want of faith ; and have hereby meant, not that he who commits mortal sin cannot be said to have faith, but that he who has faith cannot be said to commit mortal sin ; or, to speak more clearly, have, in fact, defined a state of salvation to be nothing more or less than a state *in which* our sins are forgiven ; a state of mere acceptance, not of substantial holiness. Persons who hold these opinions, consider that the great difference between a state of nature and a state of salvation is, that, in a state of nature when we sin, we are not forgiven (which is true ;) but that, in a state of salvation, when we sin, our sins are forgiven us, because we *are* in that state. On the other hand, I would maintain from Scripture, that a state of salvation is so far from being a state in which sins of every kind are forgiven, that it is a state in which there are not sins of every kind to forgive ; and that, if a man commit them, so far from being forgiven *by* his state, he falls at once *from* his state by committing them ; so far from being justified by faith, he, for that very reason, has not faith whereby to justify him. I say, our state of grace is a state of holiness ; not one in which we may be *pardoned*, but in which we are *obedient*. He who acts unworthily of it, is not sheltered by it, but forfeits it. It is a state in which power is given us to act rightly, and therefore punishment falls on us if we act wrongly.

This is plain, from Scripture, on many reasons ; of which I will here confine myself to one or two.

1. Let us first consider such Parables of our Lord as speak of the Christian state, to see what its characteristics are. These will be found not to recognize at all the case of instable, variable minds, falling repeatedly into gross sins, and saved by that state of grace in which they

have been placed. The Christian state does not shelter a man who sins, but it lets him drop. Just as we cannot hold in our hands a thing in flames, but however dear it be to us, though it be a child, we are forced at length to let it go; so wilful sin burns like fire, and the Church drops us, however unwillingly, when we sin wilfully. Not our faith, not our past services, not God's past mercies, avail to keep us in a state of grace, if "we sin wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth."* Now I say, agreeably with this, we shall find our Saviour's parables divide Christians into two states, those who continue in God's favour, and those who lose it; and those who continue in it are said to be, not those who merely have repentance and faith, who sin, but ever wash out their sins by coming for pardon, but those who do not sin;—not those whose one great aim is to obtain *forgiveness*, but those who, (though they abound in infirmities, and so far have much to be forgiven,) yet are best *described* by saying that they aim at *increasing* their talents, aim at laying up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life."†

For example, in our Saviour's first parable, who is he who builds his house upon a rock? not he who has faith merely, but he, who having doubtless faith to begin the work, has faith also strong enough to perfect it; who "*heareth and doeth.*"

Again, in the parable of the Sower, the simple question considered is, who they are who profit by what they have received; what a Christian has to do is represented as a *work*, a process which has a beginning, middle, and end; a consistent course of obedience, not a state in which we have done nothing more at the end of our lives than at the beginning, except sin the oftener, according to its length. In that parable one man is said not to admit the good seed; a second admits it, but its root withers; a third goes further, the seed strikes root, and shoots upwards, but its leaves and blossoms get entangled and overlaid with thorns. The fourth takes root, shoots upwards, and does more, bears fruit to perfection. This then is the Christian's great aim, lest he should come short after grace given him. This forms his peculiar danger, and his special dread. Of course he is not secure from peril of gross sin; of course he is continually defiled with sins of infirmity; but whereas, how to be forgiven is the main inquiry for the natural man, so, how to fulfil his calling, how to answer to grace given, how to increase his Lord's money, how to attain, this is the great problem of man regenerate. Faith gained him pardon; but works gain him a reward.

* Heb. x. 26.

† 1 Tim. vi. 19.

Again, the Net had two kinds of fish, good and bad, just and wicked; they differ in character and conduct; whereas men allow themselves to speak as if, in point of moral condition, the saved and the reprobate were pretty much on a level; the real difference being, that the one had faith appropriating Christ's merits, and a spiritual conviction of their own perishing state, and the other had not. And so I might go on to the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Talents, and others, and show in like manner that the state of a Christian, as our Lord contemplates it, is one in which he is, not lamenting the victories of sin, but working out salvation; beginning, continuing, and at last perfecting, a course of obedience.

2. This being the doctrine of the Gospels, we shall understand why it is that so little is said in the Epistles of the sins of Christians. Indeed, no one can be sufficiently aware, till he inquires into the subject, how very few texts can be produced from the Apostles' writings containing a promise of forgiveness when Christians sin.* And yet this apparent omission is not difficult to explain. They had sins before they were Christians; they were forgiven that they might not sin again. St. Paul and his brethren never pray that Christians' sins may be pardoned, but that they may fulfil their calling. Their description of the state of the Church is almost like an account of Angels and the spirits of the just. "Our conversation is in heaven," says St. Paul, and so sums up in few words what almost all his Epistles testify to us. We hear of their "glorying in tribulations," their being "alive from the dead," their "joy and peace in believing," their being "fruitful in every good work," their "increasing in the knowledge of God," their "work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." This is a picture of those whom the Apostle acknowledges as true Christians; and in the case of such persons gross transgression is impossible. They are far beyond that; what they have to avoid is short-coming in the end. They are day by day to lessen the distance between themselves and their goal. They are to produce something positive, and they are gifted with the grace of the Holy Spirit for this purpose. There is nothing generous, nothing grateful, nothing of the high temper of faith, in sitting at home and merely praying for pardon. This might be well enough, it was all that they could do while they were in the state of unassisted nature, in the house of bondage, with fetters upon them, and the iron entering into them. But their chains had been struck off; they could work, they could run; and they had a work to do, a road to journey. If they wilfully transgressed, they left the road, they

* Vide of these Sermons, Vol. iv. Sermon. vii.

abandoned the work. Then they were like Demas, who went back, and they had to be restored; to be pardoned, not *in* the state of grace, but, if I may so say, *into* it.

3. Let us now turn our thoughts to St. John's description of the Christian state. For instance, in his first Epistle he expressly tells us, "Whosoever is born of God, *sinneth not*, but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."^{*} Such is the state of the true Christian; he is not only born again, but is born of God. All who are baptized, indeed, are born of God, as well as born again; but those who fall into sin, though they cannot undo what once has been, and are still born again, yet they are born again to their greater condemnation, and, therefore, not born again of God any longer, but, till they repent, born again unto judgment. But he in whom the divine birth is realized, "*sinneth not*, but keepeth himself," and what is the consequence? "that wicked one toucheth him not;" why? because he is in the kingdom of God. Satan cannot touch any one who keeps within that kingdom. God has "translated us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son." It is by seducing us out of that kingdom that Satan destroys us; but while we continue within the sheepfold, the wolf cannot harm us. And hence the prophecy, which belongs to all Christ's followers in their degree as well as to our Lord Himself, "He shall give His Angels charge over thee to keep thee *in all thy ways*." "He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall defend thee under His wings, and thou shalt be safe under His feathers. There shall no evil happen unto thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet."[†] The serpent can but tempt, he cannot harm us, while we are in the paradise of God. This, I repeat, is the state of salvation, of which the Catechism speaks, and St. John assures us that they only are thus kept from the touch of that wicked one, who are so born of God as not to sin.

Again, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for His *seed remaineth* in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Again He says, "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Again, "If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father." What is this but to say, that if it did not, they were no longer in grace? "Whosoever abideth in Him, *sinneth not*."

^{*} 1 John, v. 18.

[†] Ps. xci. 11. 3. 10. 13.

Again, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."*

And on the other hand the same Apostle plainly declares, that they who do sin are *not* in a state of grace. For instance, "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." Again, "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. . . . Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known Him." "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."†

You see here are two states distinctly mentioned, and two states only ; a state of grace, and a state of wrath ; and he who sins in the state of grace, falls at once into the state of wrath. There is no such person under the Gospel as a "justified sinner," to use a phrase which is sometimes to be heard. If he is justified and accepted, he has ceased to be a sinner. The Gospel only knows of justified saints ; if a saint sins, he ceases to be justified, and becomes a *condemned* sinner. Some persons, I repeat, speak as if men might go on sinning, and sinning ever so grossly, yet without falling from grace, without the necessity of taking direct and formal means to get back again. They *can* get back, praised be God, but still they *have* to get back, and the error I am speaking of is forgetfulness that they *have* fallen, and *have* to return.

4. That they who sin fall into a hopeless state, that is hopeless *while* they continue in it, so that they can only gain hope *by leaving* it, is shown far more forcibly in St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. For instance, the inspired writer says, "If we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour" or eat "the adversaries."‡ Here it is expressly said that wilful sin against knowledge does not leave us as it found us. We cannot receive pardon as we received it at the first, freely and instantly, merely on faith, we are thrown out of grace ; and though our prospects are not at once hopeless, yet our state is hopeless, tends to perdition, nay, in itself, is perdition, one in which, *while* we are in it, we are lost. Hence all through this Epistle St. Paul, equally with St. John, speaks of but two states, a state of grace and glory in the heavenly Jerusalem, a communion with God, Christ, Angels, saints departed, saints on earth ; and, on the other hand, a state of wrath ;

* John iii. 9 ; ii. 6. 24 ; iii. 6. 14. † 1 John i. 6 ; ii. 9 ; iii. 4. 6. 8. 2 John 9.

‡ Heb. x. 27.

and he warns his brethren that they cannot sin without falling into the state of wrath. "We are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."* He does not speak of sin and sinners tenderly; he does not merely say, "If you sin, you are an evidence of human frailty; you are *inconsistent*; you ought to keep from sin from *gratitude*; you should be deeply *humbled* at your sins; you should betake yourselves to the atonement of Christ, if you sin." All this is true, but it would be short of the real state of the case; and St. Paul, therefore, says much more: "If you sin wilfully, you throw yourselves out of God's kingdom; you, by the very act, disinherit yourselves, you bring yourselves into a dreadful region;" and he leaves it to them to draw the inference what they ought to do to get back again. He urges against them "the terrors of the Lord." He bids them not deceive themselves, for sinners have no inheritance in the kingdom. Accordingly, he warns them "to look diligently, lest any man come short of the grace of God;" and to "fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of them should seem to come *short* of it."†

Such is the new state of "righteousness and true holiness," in which Christians are created, and such is the state of those who draw back from it; and if any one asks whether St. Paul does not say that "by *faith* we stand?" I answer, as I have already answered, that doubtless faith does keep us in a state of grace, and is the means of blotting out for us those sins which we commit in it. But *what* are those sins which we do commit? Sins of infirmity;—all other sins faith itself *excludes*. If we do commit greater sins, we have not faith. Faith we cannot use to blot out the greater sins, for faith we have not at all, if we commit such. That faith which has not power over our hearts to keep us from transgressing, has not power with God to keep Him from punishing.

To conclude. This is our state:—Christ has healed each of us, and has said to us, "See thou sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."‡ If we commit sin, we fall,—not at once back again into the unredeemed and lost world; no, but at least we fall out of the kingdom, though for a while we may linger on the skirts of the kingdom. We fall into what will in the event lead us back *into* the lost world, or rather into what is worse, unless we turn heavenward, and extricate ourselves from our fearful state as speedily as we can. We come into what may be called the passage or vestibule of hell; a place full of those unclean spirits who "seek rest and find none," and

* Heb. x. 39.

† Heb. xii. 15; iv. 1.

‡ John v. 14

rejoice in getting possession of souls, from which they were once cast out. We are no longer in the light of God's countenance, and though (blessed be His Name), doubtless we can through His help get back into it, yet we have to get back into it;—and then the whole subject becomes an anxious and serious one. Yes, it is indeed very serious, considering how the common run of Christians go on. If wilful sin throws us out of a state of grace, and if men do sin wilfully, and then forget that they have done so, and years pass away, and they merely smooth over what has happened by forgetting it, and assume that they are still in a state of grace, making no efforts by true repentance to be put into it again, only assuming that they are in it; and then go about their duties as Christians, just as if they were still God's children in the sense in which Baptism made them, and were not presumptuously intruding without leave, and not by the door, into a house whence they have been sent out, and if they so live and so die, what are we to say about them? Alas! what a dreadful thought it is, that there may be numbers outwardly in the Christian Church, nay, who at present are in a certain sense religious men, who, nevertheless, have no principle of *growth* in them, because they have sinned, and never duly repented. They may be under a disability for past sins, which they have never been at the pains to remove, or to attempt to remove. Alas! to think that they do not know their state at all, and esteem themselves in the unreserved enjoyment of God's favour, when, after all, their religion is for the most part but the reflection of others upon their surface, not a light within them, or at least but the remains of grace once given. O dreadful thought, if we are in the number! O most dreadful thought, if an account lies against us in God's books, which we have never manfully encountered, never inquired into, never even prayed against, only and simply *forgotten*; which we leave to itself to be settled as it may; and if at any time some sudden memory of it comes across us, we think of it without fear, as if what had gone out of our minds had been forgotten of God also!—or even, as the way of some is, if, when they recollect any former sins of whatever kind, we palliate them, give them soft names, make excuses, saying they were done in youth or under great temptation, or cannot be helped now, or have been forsaken.

May God give us all grace ever to think of these things; to reflect on the brightness of that state in which God once placed us, its purity, its sweetness, its radiance, its beauty, its majesty, its glory; and to think, in contrast, of the wretchedness and filthiness of that load of sin, with which our own wilfulness has burdened us: and to pray Him to show

us how to unburden ourselves;—how to secure to ourselves again those gifts which, for what we know, we have forfeited.

SERMON XIV.

TRANSGRESSIONS AND INFIRMITIES.

HEBREWS x. 38.

Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.

WARNINGS such as this would not be contained in Scripture, were there no danger of our drawing back, and thereby losing that “life” in God’s presence which faith secures to us. The blessedness of a creature is to “live before God,”* to have an “access”† into the court of the King of kings, that state of grace and glory which Christ has purchased for us. Faith is the tenure upon which this divine life is continued to us; by faith the Christian lives, but if he draws back he dies; his faith profits him nothing; or, rather, his drawing back to sin is a reversing of his faith; after which, God has no pleasure in him. And yet, clearly as this is stated in Scripture, men in all ages have fancied that they might sin grievously, yet maintain their Christian hope. They have comforted themselves with thoughts of the infinite mercy of God, as if He could not punish the sinner; or they have laid the blame of their sins on their circumstances; or they have hoped that zeal for the truth or that alms-giving would make up for a bad life; or they have relied upon repenting in time to come. And not the least subtle of such excuses is that which results from a doctrine popularly received at this day, that faith in Christ is compatible with a very imperfect state of holiness, or with unrighteousness, and avails for the pardon of an unrighteous life. So that a man may, if so be, go on pretty

* Gen. xvii. 18.

† Rom. v. 2.

much like other men, with this only difference, that he has what he considers faith,—a certain spiritual insight into the Gospel scheme, a renunciation of his own merit, and a power of effectually pleading and applying to his soul Christ's atoning sacrifice, such as others have not;—that he sins indeed much as others, but then is deeply grieved that he sins; that he would be under the wrath of God as others, had he not faith to remove it withal. And thus the necessity of a holy life is in fact put out of sight quite as fully as if he said in so many words, that it was not required; and a man may, if it so happen, be low-minded, sordid, worldly, arrogant, imperious, self-confident, impure, self-indulgent, ambitious or covetous, nay, may allow himself from time to time in wilful acts of sin which he himself condemns, and yet, by a great abuse of words, may be called spiritual.

Now, I quite grant that there are sins which faith is the means of blotting out continually, so that the "just" still "lives" in God's sight in spite of them. There is no one but sins continually so far as this, that all that he does might be more perfect, entire, blameless, than it is. We are all encompassed by infirmities, weaknesses, ignorances; and all these besetting sins are certainly, as Scripture assures us, pardoned on our faith; but it is another thing to assert this of greater and more grievous sins, or what may be called transgressions. For faith keeps us from transgressions, and they who transgress, for that very reason, have not true and lively faith; and, therefore, it avails them nothing that faith, as Scripture says, is imputed to Christians for righteousness, for they have not faith. Instead of faith blotting out transgressions, transgressions blot out faith. Faith, if it be true and lively, both precludes transgressions and gradually triumphs over infirmities, and while infirmities continue, it regards them with so perfect a hatred, as avails for their forgiveness, and is taken for that righteousness which it is gradually becoming. And such a doctrine is a holy doctrine; for it provides for our pardon without dispensing with our obedience.

This distinction in the character of sins, viz. that some argue absence of faith and involve the loss of God's favour, and that others do not, is a very important one to insist upon, even though we cannot in all cases draw the line and say what sins imply the want of faith, and what do not; because, if we know that there *are* sins which do throw us out of grace, though we do not know *which* they are, this knowledge, limited as it is, will, through God's mercy, put us on our guard against acts of sin of any kind; both from the dread we shall feel lest these in particular, whatever they are, may be of that fearful nature, and next, from knowing that at least they tend that way. The common mode of reasoning adopted by the religion of the day is this: some sins are

compatible with true faith, viz. sins of infirmity; therefore, wilful transgression, or what the text calls "departing" from God, is compatible with it also. Men do not, and say they cannot, draw the line; and thus, from putting up with small sins, they go on to sufferance of greater sins. Well, I would take the reverse way, and begin at the other end. I would force upon men's notice that there are sins which do forfeit grace; and then if, as is objected, we cannot draw the line between one kind of sin and another, this very circumstance will make us shrink not only from transgressions, but also from infirmities. From hatred and abhorrence of large sins, we shall, please God, go on to hate and abhor the small.

Now then let us betake ourselves to Scripture, in proof of this distinction between sin and sin. I say then this: first, that there are sins which forfeit a state of grace; next, that there are sins which do not forfeit it; and lastly, that sins which do not forfeit it, nevertheless tend to forfeit it.

1. No one surely can doubt that there are sins which exclude a man, while he is under their power, from salvation. This is brought home to us by all that meets us on the very surface of the inspired text. "He that committeth sin, is of the devil," says St. John; "whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God." And, again, St. Paul, "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ; whose end is destruction." Again, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace."* Again, in the text, "The just shall live by faith, but if he draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Here are instances, at first sight, of sins which forfeit our hope of salvation; but let me be more particular.

(1.) All habits of vice are such. For instance, St. Paul says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor drunkards," and so he proceeds, "shall inherit the kingdom of God."† As, then, Baptism made us "inheritors of the kingdom of heaven," so sins such as these forfeit that kingdom. Accordingly, the Apostle goes on, by way of contrast, to speak of what they had become in Christ,—“And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.”

(2.) Next, it is fearful to think, (fearful, because, among ourselves at this day, men are almost blind to the sin,) that covetousness occurs in the midst of sins or the flesh, as incurring forfeiture of grace equally

* 1 John iii. 8. 10. Phil. iii. 18, 19. Gal. v. 4. † 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

with them. St. Paul says, "neither adulterers, nor effeminate, nor *covetous*." Again, to the Ephesians, "This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor *covetous man*, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." This accords with our Lord's warning, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;"* as much as to say, If you serve mammon, you forthwith quit God's service; you cannot serve two masters at once; you have passed into the kingdom of mammon, that is, of Satan.

(3.) All violent breaches of the law of charity are inconsistent with a state of grace; for the Apostle, in the places just cited, speaks of "thieves, revilers, and extortioners." In like manner St. John says in the Book of Revelations, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and *murderers*."†

(4.) And in like manner all profaneness, heresy, and false worship; thus St. John speaks of "idolaters," with murderers; and St. Paul says that Esau, as being "a profane person," lost the blessing; and declares of all who "preach any other Gospel" than the true one, "Let him be accursed."‡

(5.) And further, "hardness of heart," or going against light; according to the text, "Let us labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief;" and "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."§

Such are greater sins or transgressions. They are here specified, not as forming a complete list of such sins, which indeed cannot be given, but in proof of what ought not to be doubted, that there are sins which are not found in persons in a state of grace.

2. In the next place, that there are sins of infirmity, or such as do not throw the soul out of a state of salvation, is evident directly it is granted that there are sins which do; for no one will pretend to say that all sins exclude from grace, else no one can be saved, for there is no one who is sinless. However, Scripture expressly recognises sins of infirmity as distinct from transgressions, as shall now be shown.

For instance: St. Paul says to the Galatians, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."|| In these words he allows that it is possible for the power of the flesh and the grace of the Spirit to co-exist in the soul; neither the flesh quenching the Spirit, nor the Spirit all at once subduing the flesh. Here then is a sinfulness which is compatible with a state of salvation.

* Eph. v. 5. Matt. vi. 24.

† Rev. xxii. 15.

‡ Heb. xii. 16. Gal. i. 8.

§ Heb. iv. 7. 11.

|| Gal. v. 17

Again, the same Apostle says, that we have a High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*," in that He had them Himself, *all but* their sin. This implies that we have sinful infirmities, yet of that light nature that they can be said to be in substance partaken by One who was pure from all sin. Accordingly in the next verse St. Paul bids us "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy." Such words do not imply a return *into* a state of salvation, but pardon *in* that state, and they correspond to what he afterwards says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," that is, by a continual approach ; or, as he says to the Romans, by Christ "we have access," or admission, "by faith into this grace wherein we *stand*."*

In like manner he says, that "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities,"† whereas transgression grieves and quenches the Spirit.

And somewhat parallel to this is his language about himself, when, after speaking of a trial to which he was subjected, he says that Christ said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness ;" and he adds, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."‡

And so in an earlier part of the same Epistle he says, apparently with the same meaning, "We have this treasure," the knowledge of the gospel, "in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."§

Sins of infirmity seem also intended in his exhortation to the Corinthians in another part of the same Epistle. After showing that righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, and bidding them "be separate, and touch not the unclean thing," he adds, "Having therefore these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of God."||

In like manner St. John says, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ; and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." It seems then there is a sin which is consistent with "walking in the light," and that from this sin "the blood of Christ cleanseth us."¶

Again, the same Apostle says soon after, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not ; and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins." Here sins are contemplated as attaching to a Christian, and as past over in Christ's righteousness ; yet presently

* Heb. iv. 15, 16 ; x. 19—22. Rom. v. 2. † Rom. viii. 26. ‡ 2 Cor. xii. 9.

|| 2 Cor. iv. 7.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 1.

¶ 1 John i. 7.

St. John says, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin,"* that is, infirmities he may admit, transgressions he cannot.

And St. James says, "In many things we offend all," that is, we all stumble. We are ever tumbling along our course, while we walk; but if we actually fall in it, we fall from it.

And St. Jude: "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."† Distinct kinds of sins are evidently implied here.

And lastly, our Lord Himself had already implied that there are sins which are not inconsistent with a state of grace, when He said of His Apostles, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."‡

3. It remains to show that these sins of infirmity tend to those which are greater, and forfeit grace; which is not the least important point which comes under consideration.

An illustration will explain what I mean, and may throw light on the whole subject. You know it continually happens that some indisposition overtakes a man, such, that persons skilled in medicine, when asked if it is dangerous, answer, "Not at present, but they do not know what will come of it; it may turn out something very serious; but there is nothing much amiss yet; at the same time, if it be not checked, and, much more, if it be neglected, it will be serious." This, I conceive, is the state of Christians day by day, as regards their souls; they are always ailing, always on the point of sickness; they are sickly, easily disarranged, obliged to take great care of themselves against air, sun, and weather; they are full of tendencies to all sorts of grievous diseases, and are continually showing these tendencies, in slight symptoms; but they are not yet in a dangerous way. On the other hand, if a Christian falls into any serious sin, then he is at once cast out of grace, as a man who falls into a pestilential fever is quite in a distinct state from one who is merely in delicate health.

Now with respect to this progress of sin from infirmity to transgression, here, as before, we have no need to go to Scripture in proof of a truth which every day teaches us, that men begin with little sins and go on to great sins, that the course of sin is a continuous declivity, with nothing to startle those who walk along it, and that the worst transgressions seem trifles to the sinner, and that the lightest infirmities are grievous to the holy. "He that despiseth small things," says the wise man, "shall fall by little and little;" this surely is the doctrine of inspired Scripture throughout; and here I will do not more than cite two passages from two Apostles in behalf of it. St. James says expressly,

* 1 John ii. 1; iii. 9.

† Jude 22, 23.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 41.

“When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, *when it is finished*, bringeth forth *death*.”* You see that from the first it tends to death; for it ends in death, but not *till* it ends, till it is *finished*. Again St. Paul says, “Make straight paths for your feet, *lest* that which is *lame* be *turned out of the way*; but let it rather be healed.”† We are ever in a degree lame in this world, even in our best estate. All Christians are such; but, when in consequence of their lameness they proceed to turn aside, or, as the text says, to “draw back,” then they differ from those who are merely lame, as widely as those who halt along a road differ from those who are out of it. Those who have turned aside, have to return; they have fallen into a different state: those who are lame, must be “healed” in the state of grace in which they are, and while they are in it; and that, *lest* they “turn out” of it. Thus lameness is at once distinct from backsliding, yet leads to it.

And here an observation may be made concerning that sin against the Holy Ghost, which shall never be forgiven. I am very far from denying that there is a certain special sin to which that awful title belongs; nor will I undertake to say what it is; but I observe thus much:—that, whereas it is the unpardonable sin, there is not a sin which we do but may be considered to tend towards it, and to be the beginning of that which *ends* in death, which ends in impenitence, ends in quenching those gracious influences, by which alone we are able to do any good. And this is a very serious thought to all who sin wilfully; that though their sin be slight, they are beginning a course, which, if let run on freely, ends in apostasy and reprobation. Hence the force of the following passage, which describes the ultimate result of a course of wilful sin, or what every wilful sin tends to become: “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, *if they shall fall away*,” so as utterly to quench the grace given them, to “renew them again to repentance.”‡

On the whole, then, this may be considered a Christian’s state, ever about to fall, yet by God’s mercy never falling; ever dying, yet always alive; full of infirmities, yet free from transgressions: and, as time goes on, more and more free from infirmities also, as tending to that perfect righteousness which is the fulfilling of the Law;—on the other hand, should he fall, recoverable, but not without much pain, with fear and trembling.

I conclude with advising you, my brethren, one thing which is ob-

* James i. 15.

† Heb. xii. 13.

‡ Heb. vi. 6.

viously suggested by what I have said. Never suffer sin to remain upon you ; let it not grow old in you ; wipe it off while it is fresh, else it will stain ; let it not get engrained ; let it not eat its way in, and rust in you. It is of a consuming nature ; it is like a canker ; it will eat your flesh. I say, beware, my brethren, of suffering sin in yourselves, and this for a great many reasons. First, if for no other than this, you will forget you have committed it, and never repent of it at all. Repent of it while you know it ; let it not be wiped from your memory without being first wiped away from your soul. What may be the state of our souls from the accumulating arrears of the past ! Alas ! what difficulties we have involved ourselves in, without knowing it. Many a man doubtless in this way lives in a languid state, has a veil intercepting God from him, derives little or no benefit from the ordinances of grace, and cannot get a clear sight of the truth. Why ? His past sins weigh upon him like a load, and he knows it not. And then again, sin neglected, not only stains and infects the soul, but it becomes habitual. It perverts and deforms the soul ; it permanently enfeebles, lames, or mutilates us. Let us then rid ourselves of it at once day by day, as of dust on our hands and faces. We wash our hands continually. Ah ! is not this like the Pharisees, unless we wash our soiled souls also ? Let not then this odious state continue in you ; in the words of the prophet, “ Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings ” from before the eyes of your Lord and Saviour. Make a clean breast of it. You sin day by day ; let not the sun go down upon your guilt. You sin continually, at least so far as to make you most miserable, most offensive, most unfit for the Angels who are your companions. Come then continually to the Fount of cleansing for cleansing. St. John says that the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Use the means appointed,—confession, prayer, fasting, making amends, good resolves, and the ordinances of grace. Do not stop to ask the degree of your guilt,—whether you have actually drawn back from God or not. Let your ordinary repentance be as though you had. You cannot repent too much. Come to God day by day, intreating Him for all the sins of your whole life up to the very hour present. This is the way to keep your baptismal robe bright. Let it be washed as your garments of this world are again and again ; washed in the most holy, most precious, most awfully salutary of all streams, His Blood, who is without blemish and without spot. It is thus that the Church of God, it is thus that each individual member of it, becomes all glorious within, and filled with grace.

Thus it is that we return in spirit to the state of Adam on his creation, when as yet the grace and glory of God were to him for a robe

and rendered earthly garments needless. Thus we prepare ourselves for that new world yet to come, for the new heavens and the new earth, and all the hosts of them in the day when they shall be created ; —when the marriage of the Lamb shall come, and His wife shall make herself ready, and to her shall be granted to be arrayed in fine linen clean and white ; for the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.

SERMON XV.

SINS OF INFIRMITY.

GALATIANS V. 17.

The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

It is not uncommonly said of the Church Catholic, and we may humbly and thankfully receive it, that though there is error, variance, and sin in an extreme degree in its separate members, yet what they do all in common, what they do in combination, what they do gathered together in one, or what they universally receive or allow, is divine and holy ; that the sins of individuals are overruled, and their wanderings guided and brought round, so that they end in truth, in spite, or even in one sense, by means of error. Not as if error had any power of arriving at truth, or were a necessary previous condition of it, but that it pleases Almighty God to work out His great purposes in and through human infirmity and sin. Thus Balaam had a word put in his mouth in the midst of his enchantments, and Caiaphas prophesied in the act of persuading our Lord's death.

What is true of the Church as a body, is true also of each member of it who fulfils his calling : the continual results, as I may call them, of his faith, are righteous and holy, but the process through which they are obtained is one of imperfection ; so that could we see his soul as Angels see it, he would, when seen at a distance, appear youthful in countenance, and bright in apparel ; but approach him, and his face has lines of care upon it, and his dress is tattered. His righteousness then

seems, I do not mean superficial, this would be to give a very wrong idea of it, but though reaching deep within him, yet not whole and entire in the depth of it; but, as it were, wrought out of sin, the result of a continual struggle,—not spontaneous nature, but habitual self-command.

True faith is not shown here below in peace, but rather in conflict; and it is no proof that a man is not in a state of grace that he continually sins, provided such sins do not remain on him as what I may call ultimate results, but are ever passing on into something beyond and unlike themselves, in truth and righteousness. As we gain happiness through suffering, so do we arrive at holiness through infirmity, because man's very condition is a fallen one, and in passing out of the country of sin, he necessarily passes through it. And hence it is that holy men are kept from regarding themselves with satisfaction, or resting in any thing short of our Lord's death, as their ground of confidence; for, though that death has already in a measure wrought life in them, and effected the purpose for which it took place, yet to themselves they seem but sinners, their renewal being hidden from them by the circumstances attending it. The utmost they can say of themselves is, that they are not in the commission of any such sins as would plainly exclude them from grace; but how little of firm hope can be placed on such negative evidence is plain from St. Paul's own words on the subject, who, speaking of the censures passed upon him by the Corinthians, says, "I know nothing by myself," that is, I am conscious of nothing, "yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord." As men in a battle cannot see how it is going, so Christians have no certain signs of God's presence in their hearts, and can but look up towards their Lord and Saviour, and timidly hope. Hence they will readily adopt the well-known words, not as expressing a matter of doctrine, but as their own experience about themselves. "The little fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound; we put no confidence at all in it; . . . our continual suit to Him is, and must be, to bear with our infirmities and pardon our offences."*

Let us then now enumerate some of the infirmities which I speak of; infirmities which, while they certainly beset those who are outcasts from God's grace, and that with grievous additions and fatal aggravations, yet are also possible in a state of acceptance, and do not in themselves imply the absence of true and lively faith. The review will serve to humble all of us, and perhaps may encourage those who are depressed by a sense of their high calling, by reminding them that they are not reprobate, though they be not all they should be.

* Hooker on Justification, § 9.

1. Now of the sins which stain us, though without such a consent of the will as to forfeit grace, I must mention first original sin. How it is that we are born under a curse which we did not bring upon us, we do not know ; it is a mystery ; but when we become Christians, that curse is removed. We are no longer under God's wrath ; our guilt is forgiven us, but still the infection of it remains. I mean, we still have an evil principle within us, dishonouring our best services. How far we are able, by God's grace, in time to chastise, restrain, and destroy this infection, is another question ; but still it is not removed at once by Baptism, and if not, surely it is a most grievous humiliation to those who are striving to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing."* It is involuntary, and therefore does not cast us out of grace ; yet in itself it is very miserable and very humbling ; and every one will discover it in himself, if he watches himself narrowly. I mean, what is called the old Adam, pride, profaneness, deceit, unbelief, selfishness, greediness, the inheritance of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil ; sin which the words of the serpent sowed in the hearts of our first parents, which sprang up and bore fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, some a hundred, and which have been by carnal descent transmitted to us.

2. Another class of involuntary sins, which often are not such as to throw us out of grace, any more than the infection of nature, but are still more humbling and distressing, consists of those which arise from our former habits of sin, though now long abandoned. We cannot rid ourselves of sin when we would ; though we repent, though God forgives us, yet it remains in its power over our souls, in our habits, and in our memories. It has given a colour to our thoughts, words, and works ; and though, with many efforts, we would wash it out from us, yet this is not possible except gradually. Men have been slothful, or self-conceited, or self-willed, or impure, or worldly-minded in their youth, and afterwards they turn to God, and would fain be other than they have been, but their former self clings to them, as a poisoned garment, and eats into them. They cannot do the things that they would, and from time to time they seem almost reduced back again to that heathen state, which the Apostle describes when he cries out, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?"*

3. Another class of involuntary sins are such as arise from want of self-command ; that is, from the mind being possessed of more light than strength, the conscience being informed, but the governing principle weak. The soul of man is intended to be a well-ordered polity, in

* Col. i. 10.

† Rom. vii. 24.

which there are many powers and faculties, and each has its due place ; and for these to exceed their limits is sin ; yet they cannot be kept within them except by being governed, and we are unequal to this task of governing ourselves except after long habit. While we are learning to govern ourselves, we are constantly exposed to the risk, or rather to the occurrence of numberless failures. We have failures by the way, though we triumph in the end ; and thus, as I just now implied, the process of learning to obey God is, in one sense, a process of sinning, from the nature of the case. We have much to be forgiven ; nay, we have the more to be forgiven the more we attempt. The higher our aims, the greater our risks. They who venture much with their talents, gain much ; and in the end they hear the words, " Well done, good and faithful servant ;" but they have so many losses in trading by the way, that to themselves they seem to do nothing but fail. They cannot believe that they are making any progress ; and though they do, yet surely they have much to be forgiven in all their services. They are like David, men of blood ; they fight the good fight of faith, but they are polluted with the contest.

I am not speaking of cases of extraordinary devotion, but of what every one must know in his own case, how difficult it is to command himself, and do that he wishes to do ;—how weak the governing principle of his mind is, and how poorly and imperfectly he comes up to his own notions of right and truth ; how difficult it is to command his feelings, grief, anger, impatience, joy, fear ; how difficult to govern his tongue, to say just what he would ; how difficult to rouse himself to do what he would at this time or that ; how difficult to rise in the morning ; how difficult to go about his duties and not to be idle ; how difficult to eat and drink just what he should ; how difficult to fix his mind on his prayers ; how difficult to regulate his thoughts through the day ; how difficult to keep out what should be kept out.

We are feeble-minded, excitable, effeminate, wayward, irritable, changeable, miserable. We have no lord over us, because we are but partially subject to the dominion of the true King of Saints. Let us try to do right as much as we will, let us pray as earnestly, yet we do not, in a time of trial, come up even to our own notions of perfection, or rather we fall quite short of them, and do perhaps just the reverse of what we had hoped to do. While there is no external temptation present, our passions sleep, and we think all is well. Then we think, and reflect, and resolve what we will do ; and we anticipate no difficulty in doing it. But when the temptation is come, where are we then ? We are like Daniel in the lions' den ; and our passions are the lions ; except that we have not Daniel's grace to prevail with God for the

shutting of the lions' mouths lest they devour us. Then our reason is but like the miserable keeper of wild beasts, who, in ordinary seasons is equal to them, but not when they are excited. Alas! Whatever the affection of mind may be, how miserable it is! It may be a dull, heavy sloth, or cowardice, which throws its huge limbs around us, binds us close, oppresses our breath, and makes us despise ourselves, while we are impotent to resist it; or it may be anger, or other baser passion, which, for the moment, escapes from our control after its prey, to our horror and our disgrace; but any how, what a miserable den of brute creatures does the soul then become, and we at the moment (I say) literally unable to help it! I am not, of course, speaking of *deeds* of evil, the fruits of wilfulness,—malice, or revenge, or uncleanness, or intemperance, or violence, or robbery, or fraud;—alas! the sinful heart often goes on to commit sins which hide from it at once the light of God's countenance; but I am supposing what was Eve's case, when she looked at the tree and saw that the fruit was good, but before she plucked it, when lust had conceived and was bringing forth sin, but ere sin was finished and had brought forth death. I am supposing that we do not exceed so far as to estrange God from us; that He mercifully chains the lions at our cry, before they do more than frighten us by their moanings or their roar,—before they fall on us to destroy us: yet at best, what misery, what pollution, what sacrilege, what a chaos is there then in that consecrated spot, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost! How is it that the lamp of God does not go out in it at once, when the whole soul seems tending to hell, and hope is almost gone? Wonderful mercy indeed it is, which bears so much! Incomprehensible patience in the Holy One, so to dwell, in such a wilderness, with the wild beasts! Exceeding and divine virtue in the grace given us, that it is not stifled! Yet such is the promise, not to those who sin contentedly after they have received grace; there is no hope while they so sin; but where sin is not part of a course, while it is still sin, whether sin of our birth, or of habits formed long ago, or of want of self-command, which we are trying to gain, God mercifully allows and pardons it, and “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from” it all.

4. Further, I might dwell upon sins which we fall into from being taken unawares,—when the temptation is sudden,—as St. Peter, when he first denied Christ; though whether it became of a different character, when he denied twice and thrice, is a further question.

5. And again, those sins which rise from the devil's temptations, inflaming the wounds and scars of past sins healed, or nearly so; exciting the memory, and hurrying us away; and thus making use of our former selves against our present selves contrary to our will.

6. And again, I might speak of those which rise from a deficiency of practical experience, or from ignorance how to perform duties which we set about. Men attempt to be munificent, and their acts are prodigal; they wish to be firm and zealous, and their acts are cruel; they wish to be benevolent, and they are indulgent and weak; they do harm when they mean to do good; they engage in undertakings, or they promote designs, or they put forth opinions, or they set a pattern, of which evil comes; they countenance evil; they mistake falsehood for truth; they are zealous for false doctrines; they oppose the cause of God. One can hardly say all this is without sin, and yet in them it may be involuntary sin and pardonable on the prayer of faith.

7. Or I might speak of those unworthy motives, low views, mistakes in principle, false maxims, which abound on all sides of us, and which we (as it were) catch from each other;—that spirit of the world which we breathe, and which defiles all we do, yet which can hardly be said to be a wilful pollution; but rather it is such sin as is consistent with the presence of the grace of God in us, and which that grace will blot out and put away.

8. And lastly, much might be said on the subject of what the Litany calls “negligences and ignorances,” on forgetfulnesses, heedlessnesses, want of seriousness, frivolities, and a variety of weaknesses, which we may be conscious of in ourselves, or see in others.

Such are some of the classes of sins which may be found, if it so happen, where the will is right, and faith lively; and which in such cases are not inconsistent with the state of grace, or may be called infirmities. Of course it must be ever recollected, that infirmities are not always to be regarded *as* infirmities; they attach also to those who live in the commission of wilful sins, and who have no warrant whatever for considering themselves in a saving state. Men do not cease to be under the influence of original sin, or sins of past years, they do not gain self-command, or unlearn negligences and ignorances, by adding to these offences others of a more grievous character. Those who are out of grace, have infirmities and much more. And there will always be a tendency in such persons to explain away their wilful sins into infirmities. This is ever to be borne in mind. I am not attempting to draw the line between infirmities and transgressions; I only say, that to whomever besides such infirmities do attach, they may happen to attach to those who are free from transgressions, and who need not despond, or be miserable on account of failings which in them are not destructive of faith or incompatible with grace. Who these are He only knows for certain, who “tries the reins and the heart,” who

“knoweth the mind of the Spirit,” and “discerns between the righteous and the wicked.” He is able, amid the maze of contending motives and principles within us, to trace out the perfect work of righteousness steadily going on there, and the rudiments of a new world rising from out the chaos. He can discriminate between what is habitual and what is accidental; what is on the growth and what is in decay; what is a result and what is indeterminate; what is of us and what is in us. He estimates the difference between a will that is honestly devoted to Him, and one that is insincere. And where there is a willing mind, He accepts it “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”* In those whose wills are holy, He is present for sanctification and acceptance; and, like the sun’s beams in some cave of the earth, His grace sheds light on every side, and consumes all mists and vapours as they rise.

We indeed have not knowledge such as His; were we ever so high in God’s favour, a certainty of our justification would not belong to us. Yet, even to know only thus much, that infirmities are no necessary mark of reprobation, that God’s elect have infirmities, and that our own sins may possibly be no more than infirmities, this surely, by itself, is a consolation. And to reflect that at least God continues us visibly in His Church; that He does not withdraw from us the ordinances of grace: that He gives us means of instruction, patterns of holiness, religious guidance, good books; that He allows us to frequent His house, and to present ourselves before Him in prayer and Holy Communion; and He gives us opportunities of private prayer; that He gives us a care for our souls; an anxiety to secure their salvation; a desire to be more strict and conscientious, more simple in faith, more full of love than we are; all this will tend to soothe and encourage us, when the sense of our infirmities makes us afraid. And if further, God seems to be making us His instruments for any purpose of His, for teaching, warning, guiding, or comforting others, resisting error, spreading the knowledge of the truth, or edifying His Church, this too will create in us the belief, not that God is certainly pleased with us, for knowledge of mysteries may be separated from love, but that He has not utterly forsaken us in spite of our sins, that He still remembers us, and knows us by name, and desires our salvation. And further, if, for all our infirmities, we can point to some occasions on which we have sacrificed any thing for God’s service, or to any habit of sin or evil tendency of nature which we have more or less overcome, or to any habitual self-

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

denial which we practise, or to any work which we have accomplished to God's honour and glory ; this perchance may fill us with the humble hope that God is working in us, and therefore is at peace within us. And, lastly, if we have, through God's mercy, an inward sense of our own sincerity and integrity, if we feel that we can appeal to God with St. Peter, that we love Him only, and desire to please Him in all things in proportion as we feel this, or at such times as we feel it, we have an assurance shed abroad on our hearts, that we are at present in His favour, and are in training for the inheritance of His eternal kingdom.

SERMON XV.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY.

2 CORINTHIANS viii. 12.

If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

MEN may be divided into two great classes, those who profess religious obedience, and those who do not ; and of those who do profess to be religious, there are again those who perform as well as profess, and those who do not. And thus on the whole there are three classes of men in the world, open sinners, consistent Christians, and between the two, (as speaking with the one, and more or less acting with the other,) professing Christians, or, as they are sometimes called, nominal Christians. Now the distinction between open sinners and consistent Christians is so clear, that there is no mistaking it ; for they agree in nothing ; they neither profess the same things nor practise the same. But the difference between professing Christians and true Christians is not so clear, for this reason, that true Christians, however consistent they are, yet do sin, as being not yet perfect ; and so far as they sin, are inconsistent, and this is all that professing Christians are. What then, it

may be asked, is the real difference between true and professing Christians, since both the one and the other profess more than they practice? Again, if you put the question to one of the latter class, however inconsistent his life may be, yet he will be sure to say that he wishes he was better; that he is sorry for his sins; that the flesh is weak; that he cannot overcome it; that God alone can overcome it; that he trusts God will, and that he prays to Him to enable him to do it. There is no form of words conceivable which a mere professing Christian cannot use; nay, more, there appears to be no sentiment which he cannot feel, as well as the true Christian, and at first sight apparently with the same justice. He *seems* just in the very position of the true Christian, only perhaps behind him; not so consistent, not advanced so much; still, on the same line. Both confess to a struggle within them; both sin, both are sorry; what then is the difference between them?

There are many differences; but before going on to mention that one to which I shall confine my attention, I would have you observe that I am speaking of differences in God's sight. Of course, we men may after all be unable altogether, and often are unable, to see differences between those who, nevertheless, are on different sides of the line of life. Nor may we judge any thing absolutely before the time, but God "searcheth the hearts." He alone, "who searcheth the hearts," "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit." We do not even know ourselves absolutely. "Yea, I judge not mine own self," says St. Paul, "but He that judgeth me is the Lord." God alone can unerringly discern between sincerity and insincerity, between the hypocrite and the man of perfect heart. I do not, of course, mean that we can form no judgment at all upon ourselves, or that it is not useful to do so; but here I will chiefly insist upon the point of *doctrine*, viz. how does the true Christian differ in God's sight from the insincere and double-minded?—leaving any practical application which it admits, to be incidentally brought out in the course of my remarks.

Now the real difference between the true and the professing Christian seems to be given us in the text,—“If there be a willing mind, it is accepted.” St. Paul is speaking of almsgiving; but what he says seems to apply generally. He is laying down a principle, which applies of course in many distinct cases, though he uses it with reference to one in particular. An honest, unaffected *des'r* o' doing right is the test of God's true servants. On the other hand, a double mind, a pursuing other ends besides the truth, and in consequence an inconsistency in conduct, and a half-consciousness (to say the least) of inconsistency, and a feeling of the necessity of defending oneself to oneself, and to God, and to the world; in a word, hypocrisy; these are the signs of

the merely professed Christian. Now I am going to give some instances of this distinction, in Scripture and in fact.

For instance. The two great Christian graces are faith and love. Now, how are these characterized in Scripture?—by their being honest or single-minded. Thus, St. Paul, in one place, speaks of “the end of the commandment being love;” what love?—*love out of a pure heart* ;” he proceeds, “and of a *good conscience* ;” and still further “and of faith,”—what kind of faith?—*faith unfeigned* ;” or, as it may be more literally translated, “unhypocritical faith;” for so the word means in Greek. Again, elsewhere he speaks of his “calling to remembrance the *unfeigned* faith” which dwelt in Timothy, and in his mother and grandmother before him; that is, literally, *unhypocritical* faith.” Again, he speaks of the Apostles approving themselves as the ministers of God, “by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love *unfeigned*,” or, more literally, “unhypocritical love.” Again, as to love towards man. “Let love be *without dissimulation*,” or, more literally, as in the other cases, “let love be *unhypocritical*.” In like manner, St. Peter speaks of Christians “having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto *unhypocritical* love of the brethren.” And in like manner, St. James speaks of “the wisdom that is from above, being first *pure . . .*” and presently, “without partiality, and *without hypocrisy*.”* Surely it is very remarkable that three Apostles, writing on different subjects and occasions, should each of them thus speak about either faith or love without hypocrisy.

A true Christian, then, may almost be defined as one who has a ruling sense of God's presence within him. As none but justified persons have that privilege, so none but the justified have that practical perception of it. A true Christian, or one who is in a state of acceptance with God, is he who, in such sense, has faith in Him, as to live in the thought that He is present with him,—present not externally, not in nature merely, or in providence, but in his innermost heart, or in his *conscience*. A man is justified whose conscience is illuminated by God, so that he habitually realizes that all his thoughts, all the first springs of his moral life, all his motives and his wishes, are open to Almighty God. Not as if he was not aware that there is very much in him impure and corrupt, but he wishes that all that is in him should be bare to God. He believes that it is, and he even joys to think that it is, in spite of his fear and shame at its being so. He alone admits Christ into the shrine of his heart; whereas others wish in some way or other to be to themselves, to have a home, a chamber, a tribunal, a

* 2 Cor. vi. 6. Rom. xii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 22. James iii. 17.

throne, a self where God is not,—a home within them which is not a temple, a chamber which is not a confessional, a tribunal without a judge, a throne without a king ;—that self may be king and judge ; and that the Creator may rather be dealt with and approached as though a second party, instead of His being that true and better self, of which self itself should be but an instrument and minister.

Scripture tells us that God the Word, who died for us and rose again, and now lives for us, and saves us, is “ quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight ; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”* Now the true Christian realizes this ; and what is the consequence ?—Why, that he enthrones the Son of God in his conscience, refers to Him as a sovereign authority, and uses no reasoning with Him. He does not reason, but he says, “ Thou, God, seest me.” He feels that God is too near him to allow of argument, self-defence, excuse, or objection. He appeals in matters of duty, not to his own reason, but to God Himself, whom with the eyes of faith he sees, and whom he makes the Judge ; not any fancied fitness, or any preconceived notion, or any abstract principle, or any tangible experience.

The book of Psalms continually instances this temper of profound, simple, open-hearted confidence in God. “ O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts long before . . . There is not a word in my tongue but Thou knowest it altogether.” “ My soul hangeth upon Thee. Thy right hand hath upholden me.” “ When I wake up, I am present with Thee.” “ Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, Thou God of Truth.” “ Commit thy way unto the Lord, and put thy trust in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. He shall make thy righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noonday.” “ Against Thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.” “ Hear the right, O Lord, consider my complaint, and hearken unto my prayer that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence, and let Thine eyes look upon the thing that is equal. Thou hast proved and visited mine heart in the night season. Thou hast tried me, and shalt find no wickedness in me ; for I am utterly purposed that my mouth shall not offend.” Once more, “ Thou shalt

* Heb iv. 12, 13.

guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of mine heart and my portion for ever.”*

Or, again, consider the following passage in St. John’s First Epistle. “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.” And in connection with this, the following from the same Epistle: “God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Again, “the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” Again, “Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” And again, “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.” And, in the same connection, consider St. Paul’s statement, that “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”†

And now, on the other hand, let us contrast such a temper of mind, which loves to walk in the light, with that of the merely professing Christian, or, in Scripture language, of the *hypocrite*. Such are they who have two ends which they pursue, religion *and* the world; and hence St. James calls them “double-minded.” Hence, too, our Lord, speaking of the Pharisees who were hypocrites, says, “Ye cannot serve God *and* mammon.”‡ A double-minded man, then, as having two ends in view, dare not come to God, lest he should be discovered; for all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light.”§ Thus, whereas the Prodigal Son “rose and came to his father,” on the contrary, Adam hid himself among the trees of the garden. It was not simple dread of God, but dread joined to an unwillingness to be restored to God. He had a secret in his heart which he kept from God. He felt towards God,—as it would seem, or at least his descendants so feel,—as one man often feels towards another in the intercourse of life. You sometimes say of a man, “he is friendly, or courteous, or respectful, or considerate, or communicative; but, after all, there is something, perhaps without his knowing it, in the background. He professes to be agreed with me; he almost displays his agreement; he says he pur-

* Psalms cxxxix. 1, 2, 4; lxiii. 8; xxxi. 5; xxxvii. 5, 6; li. 4; xvii. 1—3; lxxiii. 24—26.

† 1 John iii. 20, 21; i. 5—9; ii. 8; iii. 24; v. 10. Rom. vii. 16.

‡ Luke xvi. 13.

§ Eph. v. 13.

sues the same objects as I ; but still I do not know him, I do not make progress with him, I have no confidence in him, I do not know him better than the first time I saw him." Such is the way in which the double-minded approach the Most High,—they have a something private, a hidden self at bottom. They look on themselves, as it were, as independent parties, treating with Almighty God as one of their fellows. Hence, so far from seeking God, they hardly like to be sought by Him. They would rather keep their position and stand where they are,—on earth, and so make terms with God in heaven ; whereas, "he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."*

This being the case, there being in the estimation of the double-minded man two parties, God and self, it follows (as I have said,) that reasoning and argument is the mode in which he approaches his Saviour and Judge ; and that for two reasons,—first, because he will not *give himself* up to God, but stands upon his rights and appeals to his notions of fitness : and next, because he has some secret misgiving after all that he is dishonest, or some consciousness that he may appear so to others ; and therefore, he goes about to fortify his position, to explain his conduct or to excuse himself.

Some such argument or excuse had the unprofitable servant, when called before his Lord. The other servants said, "Lord, Thy pound hath gained ten," or "five pounds." They said no more ; nothing more was necessary ; the case spoke for itself. But the unprofitable servant did not dare leave his conduct to tell its own tale at God's judgment seat ; he said not merely, "Lord, I have kept Thy pound laid up in a napkin ;" he appealed, as it were, to reason against his Maker : he felt he must make out a case, and he went on to attempt it. He trusted not his interests on the Eternal and All-perfect Reason of God, before whom he stood, but entrenched himself in his own.

Again :—When our Lord said to the scribe, who had answered Him that eternal life was to be gained by loving God and his neighbour, "Thou hast answered right," this ought to have been enough. But his object was not to please God, but to exalt himself. And, therefore, he went on to make an objection. "But he, willing to *justify himself*, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?" whereas they only are justified in God's judgment, who give up the notion of justifying themselves by word or deed, who start with the confession that they are unjust, and who come to God, not upon their own merits, but for His mercy.

* John iii. 21.

Again :—We have the same arguing and insincere spirit exposed in the conduct of the Pharisees, when they asked Christ for the authority on which He acted. They said, “By what authority doest Thou these things ?” This might be the question of sincere inquirers on mere objectors, of faith or of hypocrisy. Observe how our Lord detects it. He asked them about St. John’s baptism ; meaning to say, that if they acknowledged St. John, they must acknowledge Himself, of whom John spake. They, unwilling to submit to Christ as a teacher and Lord, preferred to deny John to going on to acknowledge Him. Yet, on the other hand, they dare not openly deny the Baptist, because of the people ; so, between hatred of our Lord and dread of the people, they would give no answer at all. “They *reasoned* among themselves,” we are told. In consequence, our Lord left them to their reasonings ; He refused to tell them what, had they reasoned sincerely, they might learn for themselves.

What is seen in the Gospels, had taken place from the beginning. Our first parents were as ready with excuses, as their posterity when Christ came. First, Adam says, “I hid myself, for I was afraid ;” though fear and shame were not the sole or chief reasons why he fled, but an incipient hatred, if it may be said, of his Maker. Again, he says, “The woman, whom Thou gavest me . . . she gave me of the tree.” And the woman says, “The serpent beguiled me.” They did not honestly surrender themselves to their offended God, but had something to say in their behalf. Again, Cain says, when asked where his brother was, whom he had murdered, “Am I my brother’s keeper ?”

Balaam, again, is a most conspicuous instance of a double mind, or of hypocrisy. He has a plausible reason for whatever he does ; he can so skilfully defend himself, that to this day he looks like a good man, and his conduct and fortunes are a perplexity to many minds. But it is one thing to have good excuses, another to have good motives. He had not the love of the truth, the love of God, in his heart ; he was covetous of worldly goods ; and, therefore, all his excuses only avail to mark him as double minded.

Again :—Saul is another very remarkable instance of a man acting for his own ends, and yet having plausible *reasons* for what he did. He offered sacrifice on one occasion, not having a commission ; this was a sin ; yet what was his excuse ?—a very fair one. Samuel had promised to come to offer the sacrifice, and did not. Saul waited some days, the people grew discouraged, his army fell off, and the enemy was at hand,—so, as he says, he “*forced* himself.”*

* 1 Sam. xiii. 12.

Such is the conduct of insincere men in difficulty. Perhaps their difficulty may be a real one ; but in this they differ from the sincere : —the latter seek God *in* their difficulty, feeling that He only who imposes it can remove it ; but insincere men do not like to go to God ; and to them the difficulty is only so much gain, for it gives them an apparent reason, a sort of excuse, for not going by God's rule, but for deciding in their own way. Thus Saul took his own course ; thus Jeroboam, when in a difficulty, put up calves of gold and instituted a new worship without divine command. Whereas, when Hezekiah was in trouble, he took the letter of Sennacherib, "and went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord."* And when St. Peter was sinking in the water, he cried out to Christ, "Lord, save me !"[†] And in like manner holy David, after he had sinned in numbering the people, and was told to choose between three punishments offered him, showed the same honest and simple-hearted devotion, in choosing that of the three which might be the most exactly called, falling into the Lord's hands. If he must suffer, let the Lord chastise him.—"I am in a great strait," he says ; "let us fall now into the hands of the Lord ; for His mercies are great ; and let me not fall into the hand of man."[‡]

Great, then, is the difference between sincere and insincere Christians, however like their words may be to each other ; and it is needless to say, that what I have shown in a few examples, might be instanced again and again from every part of Scripture, particularly from the history of the Jews, as contained in the Prophets. All men, even after the gift of God's grace, sin : God's true servants profess and sin,—sin, and are sorry ; and hypocrites profess and sin,—sin, and are sorry. Thus the two parties look like each other. But the word of God discriminates one from the other by this test,—that Christ dwells in the conscience of one, not of the other ; that the one opens his heart to God, the other does not ; the one views Almighty God only as an accidental guest, the other as Lord and owner of all that he is ; the one admits Him as if for a night, or some stated season, the other gives himself over to God, and considers himself God's servant and instrument, now and for ever. Not more different is the intimacy of friends from mere acquaintance ; not more different is it to know a person in society, to be courteous and obliging to him, to interchange civilities, from opening one's heart to another, admitting him into it, seeing into his, loving him, and living in him ;—than the external worship of the hypocrite, from the inward devotion of true faith ; approaching God with the lips,

* Is. xxxvii. 14.

† Matt. xiv. 30.

‡ 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

from believing on Him with the heart ; so opening the Spirit that He opens to us, from so living to self as to exclude the light of heaven.

Now, as to applying what has been shown from Scripture to ourselves, this shall here be left, my brethren, to the consciences, of each of us, and a few words will suffice to do this. Do you, then, habitually thus unlock your hearts and subject your thoughts to Almighty God ? Are you living in this conviction of His Presence, and have you this special witness that that Presence is really set up within you unto your salvation ; viz. that you live in the fear of it ? Do you believe, and act on the belief, that His light penetrates and shines through your heart, as the sun's beams through a room ? You know how things look when the sun's beams are on it,—the very air then appears full of impurities, which, before it came out, were not seen. So is it with our souls. We are full of stains and corruptions, we see them not, they are like the air before the sun shines ; but though we see them not, God sees them : He pervades us as the sunbeam. Our souls, in His view, are full of things which offend, things which must be repented of, forgiven, and put away. He, in the words of the Psalmist, "has set our misdeeds before Him, our secret sins in the light of His countenance."* This is most true, though it be not at all welcome doctrine to many. We cannot hide ourselves from Him ; and our wisdom, as our duty, lies in embracing this truth, acquiescing in it, and acting upon it. Let us then beg Him to teach us the Mystery of His Presence in us, that, by acknowledging it, we may thereby possess it fruitfully. Let us confess it in faith, that we may possess it unto justification. Let us so own it, as to set Him before us in every thing. "I have set God always before me," says the Psalmist, "for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall."† Let us, in all circumstances, thus regard Him. Whether we have sinned, let us not dare keep from Him, but with the prodigal son, rise and go to Him. Or, if we are conscious of nothing, still let us not boast in ourselves or justify ourselves, but feel that "He who judgeth us is the Lord." In all circumstances, of joy or sorrow, hope or fear, let us aim at having Him in our inmost heart ; let us have no secret apart from Him. Let us acknowledge Him as enthroned within us at the very springs of thought and affection. Let us submit ourselves to His guidance and sovereign direction ; let us come to Him, that He may forgive us, cleanse us, change us, guide us, and save us.

This is the true life of saints. This is to have the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are sons of God. Such a faith alone will sus-

* Ps. xc. 8.

† Ps. xvi. 8.

tain the terrors of the last day ; such a faith alone will be proof against those fierce flames which are to surround the Judge, when He comes with His holy Angels to separate between “ those who serve God, and those who serve Him not.”*

SERMON XVII.

THE TESTIMONY OF CONSCIENCE.

2 CORINTHIANS i. 12.

Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

IN these words the great Apostle appeals to his conscience that he had lived in simplicity and sincerity, with a single aim and an innocent heart, as one who was illuminated and guided by God's grace. The like appeal he makes on other occasions ; when brought before the Jewish council he says, “ Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”† And in his second Epistle to Timothy he speaks of having served God from his forefathers “ with pure conscience.”‡

And in the text he expressly says, what he implies, of course, whenever he appeals to his conscience at all, that he is able to rejoice in this appeal. He was given to know his own sincerity in such measure, that he could humbly take pleasure in it, and be comforted by it. “ Our *rejoicing* is this,” he says, “ the testimony of our conscience.” In like manner he says to the Galatians, “ Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have *rejoicing* in himself alone, and not in another.”§ And so also speaks St. John ; “ If our heart condemn us not, then have we *confidence* towards God.”§ Such was the confidence, such the rejoicing of St. Paul and St. John ; not that they could

* Mal iii. 18. † Acts xxiii. 1. ‡ 2 Tim. i. 2, 3. § Gal. vi. 4. § 1 John iii. 21.

do any thing acceptable to God by their unaided powers, but that by His grace they could so live as to enjoy a cheerful hope of His favour, both now and evermore.

The same feeling is frequently expressed in the Psalms : a consciousness of innocence and integrity, a satisfaction in it, an appeal to God concerning it, and a confidence of God's favour in consequence. For instance, "Be Thou my judge, O Lord," says David ; he appeals to the heart-searching God, "for I have walked innocently ; my trust hath been also in the Lord, therefore shall I not fall." He proceeds to beg of God to aid him in this self-knowledge ; "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ; try out the ground of my heart," that is, lest he should be deceived in thinking himself what he was not. He next enumerates the special points in which God had enabled him to obey ; "I have not dwelt with vain persons ; neither will I have fellowship with the deceitful ; I have hated the congregation of the wicked, and will not sit among the ungodly. . . As for me, I have walked innocently ; O deliver me, and be merciful unto me. My foot standeth right ; I will praise the Lord in the congregations."* In this and other passages of the Psalms two points are brought before us : that it is possible to be innocent, and to have that sense of our innocence, which makes us happy in the thought of God's eye being upon us. Let us then dwell on a truth, of which Apostles and Prophets unite in assuring us.

What the text means by "simplicity and sincerity," I consider for all practical purposes to be the same as what Scripture elsewhere calls "a perfect heart ;" at least this latter phrase will give us some insight into the meaning of the former. You know that it is a frequent account of the kings of Judah in the Sacred history, that they walked or did not walk with God, *with a perfect heart*. In contrast with this phrase, consider what our Saviour says of the attempt made by the Pharisees to serve God *and* mammon, and St. James's account of a *double-minded* man. A man serves with a perfect heart, who serves God in all parts of his duty ; and, here and not there, but here and there and everywhere ; not perfectly indeed as regards the quality of his obedience, but perfectly as regards its extent ; not completely, but consistently. So that he may appeal to God with the Psalmist, and say, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ; and seek the ground of my heart," with the humble trust that there is no department of his duty on which Almighty God can put His hand, and say, "Here thou art not with Me : " no part in which he does not set God before him, and desire to please Him, and to be governed by Him. And some-

* Psalm xxvi. 1, 2, &c.

thing like this seems to be St. James's meaning, when he says, on the other hand, that "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all ;"* for such a one is of imperfect heart, or double-minded.

Again, such seems to be our Saviour's meaning when He uses the word *hypocrite*. A hypocrite is one who professes to be serving God faithfully, while he serves Him in only some one part of his duty, not in all parts. The word is now commonly taken to mean one who uses a profession of religion as a mere instrument of gaining his worldly ends, or who wishes to deceive men into thinking that he is what he is not. This is not exactly its Scripture sense, which seems rather to denote a person who would (if I may use the words) deceive God ; one, who, though his heart would tell him, were he honest with it, that he is *not* serving God perfectly, yet will not *ask* his heart, will not listen to it, trifles with his conscience, is *determined* to believe that he *is* religious, and (as if to strengthen himself in his own false persuasion, and from a variety of mixed motives difficult to analyze) protests his sincerity and innocence before God, appeals to God, and thus claims as his own the reward of innocence.

Now then to attempt to describe that state of heart, which Scripture calls simple and sincere, or perfect, or innocent ; and which is such, that a man may know he has it, and humbly rejoice in it.

We are by nature what we are ; very sinful and corrupt, we know ; however, we like to be what we are, and for many reasons, it is very unpleasant to us to change. We cannot change ourselves ; this too we know full well, or, at least, a very little experience will teach us. God alone can change us ; God alone can give us the desires, affections, principles, views, and tastes which a change implies : this too we know ; for I am all along speaking of men who have a sense of religion. What then is it that we, who profess religion lack ? I repeat it, this : a willingness to *be* changed, a willingness to suffer (if I may use such a word,) to suffer Almighty God to change us. We do not like to let go our old selves ; and in whole or part, though all is offered to us freely, we cling hold to our old selves. Though we were promised no trouble at all in the change ; though there were no self-denial, no exertion in changing, the case would not be altered. We do not like to be new-made ; we are afraid of it ; it is throwing us out of all our natural ways, of all that is familiar to us. We feel as if we should not *be* ourselves any longer, if we do not keep some portion of what we have been hitherto ; and much as we profess in general terms to wish to be changed, when it comes to

* James ii. 10.

the point, when particular instances of change are presented to us, we shrink from them, and are content to remain unchanged.

It is this principle of self-seeking, so to express myself, this influence of self upon us, which is our ruin. I repeat, I am speaking of those who make a *profession* of religion. Others, of course, avowedly follow self altogether; they indulge the flesh, or pursue the world. But when a man comes to God to be saved, then, I say, the essence of true conversion is a *surrender* of himself, as unreserved, unconditional surrender; and this is a saying which most men who come to God cannot receive. They wish to be saved, but in their own way; they wish (as it were) to capitulate upon terms, to carry off their goods with them; whereas the true spirit of faith leads a man to look off from self to God, to think nothing of his own wishes, his present habits, his importance or dignity, his rights, his opinions, but to say, "I put myself into Thy hands, O Lord; make Thou me what Thou wilt; I forget myself; I divorce myself from myself; I am dead to myself; I will follow Thee." Samuel, Isaiah, and St. Paul, three Saints in very different circumstances, all instance this. The child Samuel, under Eli's instruction, says, "Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth."* The prophet Isaiah says, "Here am I: send me."† And still more exactly to the point are St. Paul's words, when arrested by the miraculous vision, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"‡ Here is the very voice of self-surrender, "What wilt Thou have me to do? Take Thy own way with me; whatever it be, pleasant or painful, I will do it." These are words worthy of one who was to be to after-ages the pattern of simplicity, sincerity, and a pure conscience; and as he spake, so he acted; for in his own narrative of what happened, he goes on to say, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Now to give some instances in illustration.

1. One very common case, though it is not one in which men have any pretensions to be considered as sincere, is when they determine to repent more fully by-and-by, or to be more strict in their mode of living by-and-by. However, it will serve to explain what I would say. Alas! so common is it, that I should not wonder if some persons here present, were they but honest, would confess it of themselves, that they dare not put themselves into God's hands, lest He should make them what they love not. Here then is the absence of a perfect heart, a shrinking from the absolute surrender and sacrifice of self to God.

2. Again, in a number of cases want of perfectness is shown in their keeping away, as they obstinately do, from the Lord's Supper. I am not speaking of the case of open sinners. Of course, it is well that

* 1 Sam. iii. 9.

† Is. vi. 8.

‡ Acts ix. 6.

they should feel reluctant ; it would be dreadful indeed if they did not. Nor do I mean to say that many are not kept away by fears, which they ought not to have, which are mistaken. But still there are a great number, who have good words in their mouth, who profess all reverence, all service towards God, acknowledge His power and love, believe in what Christ has done for them, and say they desire to be ruled by Him, and to die the death of the righteous, who yet are quite unmoveable on this particular point. Why is this ? I fear, for this reason. They dare not profess in God's sight that they will serve Him. They dare not promise ; they dare not pray to Him. They dare not beg Him to make them wholly His. They dare not ask Him to disclose to them their secret faults. They dare not come to an Ordinance, in which God meets them face to face. As many a man will tell an untruth who dare not swear it, so many men will make random professions of obedience, who dare not put themselves in circumstances when perhaps they may be taken at their word. And as cowards disguise from themselves their own cowardice, till brought into danger, so do these their hypocrisy, till obliged to take a side. They profess vaguely ; but they dare not definitely and solemnly say, "And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee."

3. Another instance of insincerity is set before us in the conduct of the young man in the Gospel, who came running to Christ, and saying, "Good Master." He did not justly know himself, and he flattered himself that he was perfect in heart when he had a reserve in his obedience. You will observe he was even forward and rude in his manner ; and here we seem to gain a lesson. When young persons address themselves to religious subjects without due reverence and godly fear, when they rush towards them impetuously, engage in them hotly, talk about them vehemently, and profess them conspicuously, they should be very suspicious of themselves, lest there be something or other wrong about them. Men who are quite honest, who really wish to surrender themselves to Christ, have counted the cost. They feel it is no slight sacrifice which they are making ; they feel its difficulty and its pain ; and therefore they cannot make an impetuous offer of their services. They cannot say, "Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest ;" it is too great a profession. They dare not say, "All these have I kept from my youth up ;" lest, after all, they discover something in themselves lacking. They have no heart to say, "Good Master," in a familiar light manner, before him who stands to them instead of God, and whose words involve duties. The young ruler came running, not waiting till Christ should look on him or call,—not fearing,

but intruding himself. Christ exposed what was in his heart, and he who ran to accost Him, stole away sorrowing.

4. And here perhaps we shall understand something of the contrast between St. Peter's first and second profession of service to Christ. He made the first of his own accord. Christ had said, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now."* He answered, "Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." Now, we may indeed say that his fall was merely an instance of weakness;—so it may have been;—yet it does seem likely too, that, at the time he said it, he had not that perfect devotion to Christ which he had afterwards. Let it not be imagined that on that former occasion, when "he forsook all and followed" Christ, or again, when he went to meet Him on the sea, the Holy Apostle did not act out of the fulness of a perfect heart; but may we not reverently suppose that till Pentecost his state of mind was variable, and sometimes had more of heaven in it than at other times? We may surmise that he, who first said, "Thou art the Christ," and next, "Be it far from Thee, Lord," earning blessing and rebuke almost in one breath, on this occasion came short of the sincerity which he showed before and afterwards. We may surmise that his fault was not merely self-deception, but, in a measure, a reserved devotion; that there was one corner (as it were) of his heart, which at that moment was not Christ's; for the more that is the case, the louder men commonly talk, in order to beat down the risings of conscience. When a man half suspects his own honesty, he makes loud professions of it. Contrast, with this, St. Peter's words after our Lord's resurrection. First, he waits for Christ to say, "Follow Me;" next, observe his answer to Christ, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."† Then he felt that he dare appeal to his heart-searching Judge, in witness that he was making an unreserved surrender of himself. He did not thus speak before.

5. Another illustration may be drawn from the state of mind which not unfrequently is found in a person who has been injured or insulted, and is bound in duty to forgive the offenders. I am supposing a well-meaning and religious man; and he often lies under the temptation to forgive them up to a certain point, but at the same time to make a reserve in favour of his own dignity, or to satisfy his sense of justice, and thus to take the matter in part into his own hands. He cannot get himself honestly to surrender every portion of resentment, and to leave his cause simply to God, as remembering the words, "Vengeance as Mine; I will repay."‡ This reluctance is sometimes seen very

* John xiii. 33.

† John xxi. 15.

‡ Rom. xii. 19.

clearly under other circumstances, in the instance of children, who, whether they be out of temper, or obstinate, or otherwise what they should not be, cannot bring themselves to do that very thing which they ought to do, which is enough, which comes up to the mark. They are quite conscious that they are wrong, and they wish to be right; and they will do a number of good things short of what is required of them; they will show their wish to be at one again with the parties they are displeased with; they will go round about their duty,—but from pride, or other wrong feeling, they shrink from going close to it, and, as it were, embracing it. And so again, if they have been in fault, they will make excuses, or half-confess; they will do much, but they cannot bring themselves to do a whole deed, and make a clean breast of it.

6. Lastly may be mentioned, the case of persons seeking the truth. How often are they afraid or loth to throw themselves on God's guidance, and beg Him to teach them! how loth to promise in His sight that they will follow the truth wherever it leads them! but whether from fear of what the world will say, fear of displeasure of friends, or of ridicule of strangers, or of triumph of enemies, or from entertaining some fancy or conceit of their own, which they are loth to give up, they hang back, and think to gain the truth, not by rising and coming for it, but, as it were, by a mere careless extension and grasp of the hand, while they sit at ease, or proceed with other work that employs them. Much might be said on what is a very fertile part of the subject.

In all these ways, then, to which many more might be added, men serve God, but do not serve Him with a *perfect* heart, or “in simplicity and sincerity.” And in explaining what I consider Scripture to mean by perfectness of purpose, I have explained also in a measure how it is that a person must know if he has it. For it is a state of mind which will not commonly lie hid from those who are endued with it. Not more different is ice from the flowing stream, than a half purpose from a whole one. “He bloweth with His wind, and the waters flow.” So is it when God prevails on a heart to open itself to Him, and admit Him wholly. There is a perceptible difference of feeling in a man, compared with what he was, which, in common circumstances, he cannot mistake. He may have made resolves before, he may have argued himself into a belief of his own sincerity, he may have (as it were) convinced himself that nothing can be required of him more than he has done, he may have asked himself what more *is* there to do, and yet have felt a something in him still which *needed* quieting, which was ever rising up and troubling him, and had to be put down again. But when he really gives himself up to God, when he gets himself honestly to say, “I sacrifice to Thee this cherished wish, this lust, this

weakness, this scheme, this opinion : make me what *Thou* wouldest have me ; I bargain for nothing ; I make no terms ; I seek for no previous information whither *Thou* art taking me ; I will be what *Thou* wilt make me, and all that *Thou* wilt make me. I say not, I will follow Thee withersoever *Thou* goest, for I am weak ; but I give myself to Thee, to lead me anywhither. I will follow Thee in the dark, only begging Thee to give me strength according to my day. Try me, O Lord, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts ; look well if there be any way of wickedness in me ; search each dark recess with Thy own bright light, and lead me in the way everlasting,"—what a difference is this ! what a plain perceptible change, which cannot be mistaken ! what a feeling of satisfaction is poured over the mind ! what a sense that at length we are doing what we should do, and approving ourselves to God our Saviour ! Such is the blessedness and reward of confession. "I said I will confess my sins unto the Lord, and so thou forgavest the wickedness of my sins." It matters little whether it is a resolve for the future or a confession of the past ; the same temper is involved in both. If a person does not confess with a desire of amendment, it is not a real confession ; but he who comes to God to tell Him sorrowfully all that he knows wrong in himself, is thereby desiring and beginning what is right and holy ; and he who comes to beg Him to work in him all that is right and holy, does thereby implicitly condemn and repent of all that is wrong in him. And thus he is altogether innocent ; for all his life is made up either of honest endeavour or of honest confession, exactness in doing or sorrow for not doing, of simplicity and sincerity, repentance being on the one side of it, and obedience on the other. Such is the power divinely vouchsafed in the Gospel to an honest purpose. It either *does*, or blots out what is *not* done ; or rather by one act, or in itself, which is one, it both performs part, and blots out the rest.

And here it is obvious to point out the bearing of what has been said on the subject of Justification. We know that faith justifies us ; but what is the test of true faith ? Works are its evidence ; but they are so on the whole, after a sufficient period of time to others, and at the judgment of the last day. They scarcely can be considered an evidence definite and available for a man's own comfort at any moment when he seeks for one. He does some things well, some ill ; and he is more clear-sighted and more sensitive in the instance of his failings than of his successful endeavours. If what he does well, be an evidence of faith, what he does ill will be to him a more convincing proof that he has not faith ; and thus he cannot conclusively appeal to his works. Now, I suppose, absolute certainty about our state cannot be

attained at all in this life ; but the nearest approach to such certainty, which is possible, would seem to be afforded by this consciousness of openness and singleness of mind, this good understanding (if I may use such an expression) between the soul and its conscience, to which St. Paul so often alludes. "Our rejoicing is this," he says, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world." He did not rejoice in his faith, but he was justified by faith, because he could rejoice in his sincerity. Perfectness of heart, simple desire to please God, "a spirit without guile," a true and loyal will, where these are present, faith is justifying ; and whereas those who have this integrity will more or less be conscious of it, therefore, after all exceptions duly made on the score of depression of spirits, perplexity of mind, horror at past sins, and the like, still, on the whole, really religious persons will commonly enjoy a subdued but comfortable hope and trust that they are in a state of justification. They may have this hope more or less ; they may deserve to have it more or less ; at times they may even be unconscious of it, and yet it may secretly support them ; they may fancy themselves in perfect darkness, yet it may be a light cheering them forward ; they may vary in their feelings about their state from day to day, and yet whether or not they can collect evidence to satisfy their reason, still if they be really perfect in heart, there will be this secret sense of their sincerity, with their reason or against reason, to whisper to them peace. And on the other hand, it never will rise above a sober trust, even in the most calm, peaceful, and holy minds. They to the end will still but say, "Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief." They still will say, in St. Paul's words, "I am conscious to myself of nothing, yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord." "Judge me, O Lord ; examine me ; search the ground of my heart ; judge *Thou* me, who art the sole Judge ; I judge not myself. I do but say, *Thou* knowest me ; I say not, I know." It was but the Pharisee that said, "Lord, I thank Thee I am not as other men are." We can but "gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end, and pass the time of our sojourning here in fear ;"* though "the day has dawned, and the day star has arisen in our hearts."†

One more remark must be made. It may be objected, that, if the feeling of a good conscience be the evidence to us of our justification, then are persons in a justified state, who are external to the Church, provided they have this feeling. I reply briefly,—for to say much here would be out of place,—that every one will be judged according to his

* 1 Pet. i. 13—17.

† 2 Pet. i. 19.

light and his privileges ; and any man who has really the testimony of a good conscience is acting up to his light, whatever that is. This does not, however, show that he has always so acted ; nor determine what his light is ; nor what degree of favour he is in ; nor whether he might have been in greater, had his past actions been other than they have been. It but shows that he is accepted *in* that state in which he is, be it one of greater favour or less, heathenism,* schism, superstition, or heresy ; and that, because his faults and errors *at present* are not wilful. And in like manner, in the case of members of the Church, a good conscience evidences God's acceptance, according to that measure of acceptance which He gives to His Church, that is, evidences their justification ; whereas what privileges attach to bodies or creeds external to the Church we do not know. No inward feeling can do more than what is here assigned to it, unless an inward feeling can be the evidence of an external revelation.

But here I am speaking to members of the Church ; to those who, if they serve God with a perfect heart, are justified. Let us then, since this is our privilege, attempt to share in St. Paul's sincerity, that we may share in his rejoicing. Let us endeavour to become friends of God and fellow citizens with the saints ; not by sinless purity, for we have it not ; not in our deeds of price, for we have none to show ; not in our privileges, for they are God's acts, not ours ; not in our Baptism, for it is outward ; but in that which is the fruit of Baptism within us, not a word but a power, not a name but a reality, which, though it can claim nothing, can beg every thing ;—an honest purpose, an unreserved, entire submission of ourselves to our Maker, Redeemer, and Judge. Let us beg Him to aid us in our endeavour, and, as He has begun a good work in us, to perform it until the day of the Lord Jesus.

* Acts x. 35.

SERMON XVIII.

MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN.

1 CORINTHIANS ix. 24.

Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize?
So run, that ye may obtain.

Nothing is more clearly brought out in Scripture, or more remarkable in itself than this, that in every age, out of the whole number of persons blessed with the means of grace, few only have duly availed them of this great benefit. So certain, so uniform is the fact, that it is almost stated as a doctrine. "Many are called, few are chosen." Again, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." And again, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat . . . Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And St. Paul seems expressly to turn the historical fact into a doctrine, when he says, by way of remark upon his own day, as compared with former ages of the Church, "Even so then, at this present time also," that is, as formerly, "there is a *remnant* according to the election of grace."*

The word "*remnant*" is frequent with the Prophets, from whom St. Paul takes it. Isaiah, for instance, says, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a *remnant* shall be saved." Jeremiah speaks of "the *remnant* of Judah," and the "small number," to which a return was promised. Ezekiel, too, declares that God "will leave a *remnant*," "that ye may have some," continues the divine oracle, "that shall escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember Me among the nations, whither they shall be carried cap-

* Matt. xx. 16. Luke xiii. 24. Matt. vii. 13, 14. Rom. xi. 5.

tives." And so well understood was this, that the hope of good men never reached beyond it. Neither the promise, on the one hand, nor the hope, on the other, ever goes beyond the prospect of a remnant being saved. Thus the consolation given to the Church in the book of Jeremiah is, that God "will not make a *full* end;" and Ezra, confessing the sins of his people, expresses his dread lest there should be "*no remnant.*"* Thus Christ, His Apostles, and His Prophets, all teach the same doctrine, that the chosen are few, though many are called: that one gains the prize, though many run the race.

This rule in God's dispensations is most abundantly and awfully illustrated in their history. At the time of the flood, out of a whole world, in spite of Adam's punishment, in spite of Enoch's preaching, in spite of Noah's setting about the ark, eight only found acceptance with God, and even one of these afterwards incurred a curse. When the Israelites were brought out of Egypt by miracle, two only of the whole generation entered the land of promise. Two tribes alone out of twelve remained faithful at the time of the great schism, and continued in possession of God's covenanted mercies. And when Christ came, the bulk of His own people rejected Him, and His Church came but of the scanty remnant, "as a root out of a dry ground."

Moreover, it is observable that Almighty God seems as if to rejoice, and deigns to delight Himself in this small company, who adhere to Him, as if their fewness had in it something of excellence and preciousness. "Fear not," He says, "little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." "I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given Me." In a like spirit, St. Paul says, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate." And in the time of Elijah, "I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." And in the time of Moses, "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people."†

And it need scarcely be added, that the same bountifulness on God's part, the same ingratitude on the part of man, the same scarcity of faith, sanctity, truth, and conscientiousness, have marked the course of the Christian Dispensation, as well as of those on which inspired writers have commented.

So clear is this, that persons who, from unwillingness to take the

* Rom. xi. 27. Jer. xlv. 28. Ezek. vi. 8, 9. Jer. xlv. 28. Ezra. ix. 14.

† Luke xii. 32. Matt. x. 16. John xvii. 9. Rom. viii. 29; xi. 4. Deut. vii. 7.

narrow way, or from other like cause, have disputed it, have scarcely any thing left them to urge but certain false views or consequences, which have been, or may be, entertained concerning the doctrine. And as these misconceptions tend at once to prejudice the mind against it, and to pervert its reception of it, I shall now examine one or two of the objections to which it is exposed.

1. Now, first, it has often happened that, because the elect are few, serious men have considered that this took place in consequence of some fixed decree of God. They have thought that they were few, because it was God's will that they should not be many. Now it is doubtless a great mystery, why this man receives the truth and practises it, and that man does not. We do not know how it is; but surely we do not tend to solve it, by saying God has so decreed it. If you say that God absolutely chooses the one and rejects the other, then *that* becomes the mystery. You do but throw it back a step. It is as difficult to explain this absolute willing or not willing, on the part of Almighty God, as to account for the existence of free will in man. It is as inexplicable why God should act differently towards this man and that, as it is why this man or that should act differently towards God. On the other hand, we are solemnly assured in Scripture that God "hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

The doctrine then, which is implied in the text, does not lead us to any hard notions of God. He is a most loving Father still, though few are chosen. His mercy is over all His works, and to no one does the word of life come but with the intent that he may live. If the many remain in unbelief, they "are not straitened" in God's love, but they "are straitened in their own bowels. Man will not be what by God's renewing and co-operating grace he might be. It is man's doing, not God's will, that, while the visible Church is large, the Church invisible is small.

2. But it may be said that this doctrine lies open to another objection: that to believe that few only find the gate of life, necessarily makes a man self-confident and uncharitable towards others, whether he considers himself predestined to life or not. Every one, it is said, will place himself on the safe side of the line, and, of course, will place his friends with him; and all others he will give over, as if they were to be classed among the many. Now the text, and the verses which follow it, supply the readiest answer to this objection. St. Paul speaks as if the Christian course were a race, in which one only out of many could

* Ez. xxxiii. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

succeed. And what is the conclusion he arrives at? "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." You see how far the holy Apostle was from security and self-satisfaction, though he, if any one, would have had a right to feel easy about his state. And the exhortation he gives his brethren is, "So run that ye may obtain." Are candidates for a prize confident, because only one can gain it? What is the meaning of asserting that "they which run in a race" take it for granted that they are on the winning side?

And yet it is quite true that there are men, who in consequence of holding the doctrine that the chosen are few, instead of exerting themselves, become proud and careless. But then, let it be observed, these persons hold another doctrine besides, which is the real cause of their carnal security. They not merely think that Christ's flock is small, but that we can tell whether or no we belong to it, and that they do know that they themselves belong to it. Now, if a man thinks he knows for certain that he shall be saved, of course he will be much tempted to indulge in a carnal security, and to look down upon others, and that, whether the true flock of Christ is large or small. It is not the knowledge that the chosen are *few* which occasions these bad feelings, but a man's private assurance that *he* is chosen.

St. Paul tells us, that whom God "did foreknow He also did predestinate," and "whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified;" but he does not say that God discloses this to the persons who are subjects of it. He has deep and eternal counsels, but they are secret ones; He has a decree, founded on righteousness and truth, but it is not revealed. We know not, we cannot know, whom God has chosen for salvation; and while we understand this, and keep it before us, we shall not be puffed up about ourselves, nor harsh and censorious towards others, though we bear in mind ever so much that the gate of heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it.

This, I think, is very plain; yet it may be useful to enlarge upon it. Let us take an illustration, not exact, but sufficient for the purpose. Supposing we had to cast lots for some worldly benefit, a sum of money, or some desirable post, or the like, and only three or four out of a great number could succeed, how should we be affected beforehand? Should we be at all led to speculate or judge who were to be successful, who unsuccessful? And why not? Because it would be idle to employ our thoughts about an event which nothing we saw before us, nothing we could see, tended to discover to us, idle to attempt to decide in a case where there were no means of deciding. For what any of us could know, one

man had as good a prospect as another. We should feel as much as this, that a certain prize was destined for some out of all of us ; we should feel anxious and expectant, and that would be the end of the matter. Now, as regards our heavenly prospects, the decision indeed is not a matter of chance ; God forbid !—but yet it is as much hid from us as if it were. Nothing that we see, or think we see, can enable us to decide about the future. We do not know but those who are the greatest sinners now, may repent, reform, and in severity and austereness of life surpass ourselves ; the last oftentimes become the first. Nor do we know about ourselves, however fair we seem, but we may fall away. We cannot compare ourselves with others at all. All we know is, and a most awful thought it is, that out of the whole number of those who have received the Christian calling, out of ourselves and our friends, and all whom we see and hear of in the intercourse of life, but a few are chosen ; but a few act up to their privileges. Now, considering the inscrutable darkness in which the event lies, hid almost like the time of judgment in the prescience of Almighty God, is this a thought to fill us with confidence and pride, or is it not rather an exceedingly solemn and dreadful thought ? Should a prophet declare that out of a given number of persons but a few would be alive this time next year, that the greater part would die, should we, under any circumstances, feel altogether easy, were our health ever so good in appearance, or were there ever so many older persons than ourselves in the number addressed ? Should we not be made very anxious at every little indisposition, or at every symptom of illness, or at every chance of accident from without ? Should we have much heart for speculating about others ?

And this surely is the real state of the case. Our means of judging ourselves or others are so very insufficient, that they are practically nothing ; and it is our wisdom to let the attempt alone. We may know about ourselves, that at present we are sincere and earnest, and so far in God's favour ; we may be able to say that such and such words or deeds are right or wrong in another ; but how different is this from having the capacity to decide absolutely about our or his eternal doom ! How different this from being able to take in the whole compass of our lives, the whole range and complication of our thoughts, words, deeds, habits, principles and motives ! How different from being able to argue from what we see to what God knows, or from discerning whether the divine seed has taken root in particular minds ! St. Paul himself, though conscious of nothing, says to the Corinthians, " Yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord ; therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to

light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”* We cannot estimate the real value of any thing which we or others do ; or how it stands in making up their or our final account in God’s sight. What is a sign of faith in one man, is not in another ; what is a great deed in one man, is not in another. The differences of disposition, education, and guidance are so great, and make the problem so intricate, that it would seem to be the height of madness, (were it not sometimes attempted by persons not mad,) to attempt to solve it. St. Paul says in one place that he has not “attained.” On the contrary, at the end of his life, after fighting a good fight, then he says that “henceforth there *was* laid up for him a crown of righteousness.”† Thus there was a point at which, and not before, his salvation was, practically speaking, secured. What happened in his case, may, for what we know to the contrary, happen in ours also ; and the point at which victory is certain may vary in the case of every one of us.

Or, again, let us recur to the Apostle’s words in the text ; “Know yt not,” he says, “that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize ? So run that ye may obtain.” When a number of persons are contending for a prize, since one alone can obtain it, it is plain that no one from what he knows about himself, can conclude any thing concerning his own success ; because, even be he ever so likely in himself, yet another may be more likely. The event is utterly and totally hid from him, unless he be very well acquainted with his rivals. Now here, again, the illustration used is not altogether parallel. In the prize which we run for, praised be God, there is no such rivalry of one against another ; there is no restriction ; and if all did their duty, all would succeed. Yet the effect is the same as regards our knowledge, as if only one could succeed ; I mean, we do not know the *standard* by which God will judge us. Nothing that we are, can assure us that we shall answer to what He expects of us ; for we do not know what that is ; it can but avail to cheer us and give us hopes and good spirits. In contending for a prize, it is of no use to be second best. He who comes second, as little gains it as he who comes last. And so in striving to enter in at the strait gate, unless we rise to that which God requires of us, unless we attain, no matter how near we were attaining ;—after all, it has come to this, that we have not attained. This thought will surely ever keep us from dwelling on our own proficiency, whatever it is ; rather it will lead us, with the great Apostle, to “follow after, if that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of

* 1 Cor. iv. 5. † Phil. iii. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 8

Christ Jesus." It is not till life is over, when we have lived in the fear of God consistently, when death has put its seal upon us, and cut us off from the chance of falling, that others, surveying us, and observing our consistency and perseverance in well-doing, will humbly trust that we are in St. Paul's case, to whom, after "finishing his course," it was revealed that "a crown of righteousness was laid up for him."

The doctrine, then, that few are chosen though many be called, properly understood, has no tendency whatever to make us fancy ourselves secure and others reprobate. We cannot see the heart, we can but judge from externals, from words and deeds, professions and habits. But these will not save us, unless we persevere in them to the end; and they are no evidence that we shall be saved, except so far as they suggest hope that we shall persevere. They are but a beginning: they tell for nothing till they are completed. Till we have done all, we have done nothing; we have but a prospect, not possession. If we ultimately do attain, every good thing we shall have done will have tended to that attainment, as a race tends to a goal; but, unless we attain, it will not have so tended; and, therefore, from no good thing which we do can we argue that we are sure to attain.

3. One other misconception of this doctrine shall be mentioned, and then I will conclude. It may be said, then, that the belief that true Christians are few, leads men to isolate themselves in their own opinions, to withdraw from the multitude, to adopt new and extravagant views, and to be singular in their conduct, as if what the many held and did could not be right. This may sometimes be the case; but I would have it remarked, that if true Christians are few, they must in a certain sense be singular. Singularity is no proof that we are right in our opinions, or are Christ's chosen, because there are a great many ways of being singular, and all cannot be right. And persons are often, as is objected, singular, from love of being so, from conceit, or desire to excite remark; and therefore it does not follow that even those who profess the views of Christ's true servants, are themselves in their number. But, on the other hand, neither does it follow, because men are singular in their opinions, that they are wrong, nor, because other opinions are generally received in their day, that therefore these are right. If the multitude of men are ever in the broad way "that leadeth to destruction," there is no ground for maintaining that, in order to be right in our religious views, we must agree with the many; rather, if as persons are, so are their opinions, it would seem to be certain that popular opinions will ever be as mistaken and dangerous as popular practices. Those who serve God faithfully must ever look to be accounted, in their generation, singular, intemperate, and extreme. They are not so; they must guard

against becoming so ; if they are so, they are equally wrong as the many, however they may, in other respects, differ from them ; but still it is no proof that they are so, because the many call them so. It is no proof that they are so, because others take it for granted that they are, pass their doctrines over, put their arguments aside without a word, —treat them gravely, or are vexed about them, or impatient with them, or ridicule them, or fiercely oppose them. No ; there are numberless clouds which flit over the sky, there are numberless gusts which agitate the air to and fro : as many, as violent, as far-spreading, as fleeting, as uncertain, as changing, are the clouds and the gales of human opinion ; as suddenly, as impetuously, as fruitlessly, do they assail those whose mind is stayed on God. They come and they go ; they have no life in them, nor abidance. They agree together in nothing but in this, in threatening like clouds, and sweeping like gusts of wind. They are the voice of the many ; they have the strength of the world, and they are directed against the few. Their argument, the sole argument in their behalf, is their prevalence at the moment ; not that they existed yesterday, not that they will exist to-morrow ; not that they base themselves on reason, or ancient belief, but that they are what every one now takes for granted, or, perhaps, supposes to be in Scripture, and therefore, it seems, not to be disputed :—not that they have most voices through long periods, but that they happen to be most numerously professed in the passing hour. On the other hand, divine truth is ever one and the same ; it changes not, any more than its Author ; it stands to reason, then, that those who uphold it must ever be exposed to the charge of singularity, either for this or for that portion of it, in a world which is ever varying.

What a most awful view does human society present to those who would survey it religiously ! Go where you will, you find persons with their own standards of right and wrong, yet each different from each. Thus everywhere you find both a witness that there is a standard, and yet an evidence everywhere that that standard is lost. Go where you will, you find in each distinct circle certain persons held in esteem as patterns of what men should be ; each sect and party has its Doctors, its Confessors, and its Saints. And in all parties you will find so many possessed of good points of character, if not exemplary in their lives, that, to judge by appearances, you do not know why the chosen should not be many instead of few. Your very perplexity in reconciling the surface of things with our Lord's announcements, the very temptation you lie under to explain away the plain words of Scripture, show you that your standard of good and evil, and the standard of all around you, must be very different from God's standard. It shows you, that if the chosen are few, there must be some particular belief necessary, or some par-

ticular line of conduct, or something else different from what the world supposes, in order to account for this solemn declaration. It suggests to you that perchance there must be a certain perfection, completeness, consistency, entireness of obedience, for a man to be chosen, which most men miss in one point or another. It suggests to you that there is a great difference between being a hearer of the word and a doer ; a well-wisher of the truth, or an approver of good men or good actions, and a faithful servant of the truth. It suggests to you that it is one thing to be in earnest, another and higher to be "rooted and grounded in love." It suggests to you the exceeding dangerousness of single sins, or particular bad habits. It suggests to you the peril of riches, cares of this life, station, and credit.

Of course we must not press the words of Scripture ; we do not know the exact meaning of the word "chosen ;" we do not know what is meant by being saved "so as by fire ;" we do not know what is meant by "few." But still the few can never mean the many ; and to be called without being chosen, cannot but be a misery. We know that the man, in the parable, who came to the feast without a wedding garment, was "cast into outer darkness."* Let us then set at nought the judgment of the many, whether about truth and falsehood, or about ourselves, and let us go by the judgment of that line of Saints, from the Apostles' times downwards, who were ever spoken against in their generation, ever honoured afterwards,—singular in each point of time as it came, but continuous and the same in the line of their history,—ever protesting against the many, ever agreeing with each other. And, in proportion as we attain to their judgment of things, let us pray God to make it live in us ; that at the Last Day, when all veils are removed, we may be found among those who are inwardly what they seem outwardly,—who with Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Joshua, and Caleb, and Phineas, and Samuel, and Elijah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and the Baptist, and St. Paul, have "borne and had patience, and for His Name-sake laboured and not fainted," watched in all things, done the work of an Evangelist, fought a good fight, finished their course, kept the faith.

* Matt. xxii. 13.

SERMON XIX.

PRESENT BLESSINGS.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 18.

I have all, and abound: I am full.

SUCH is St. Paul's confession concerning his temporal condition, even in the midst of his trials. Those trials brought with them spiritual benefits; but, even as regarded this world, he felt he had cause for joy and thankfulness, in spite of sorrows, pains, labours and self-denials. He did not look on this life with bitterness, complain of it morosely, or refuse to enjoy it; he was not soured, as the children of men often are, by his trials; but he felt, that if he had troubles in this world, he had blessings also; and he did not reject these, but made much of them. "I have all, and abound: I am full," he says. And elsewhere, he tells us, that "every creature of God is good," and that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."*

Gloom is no Christian temper; that repentance is not real, which has not love in it; that self-chastisement is not acceptable, which is not sweetened by faith and cheerfulness. We must live in sunshine, even when we sorrow; we must live in God's presence, we must not shut ourselves up in our own hearts, even when we are reckoning up our past sins.

These thoughts are suitable on this day,† when we first catch a sight, as it were, of the Forty Days of Lent. If God then gives us grace to repent, it is well; if He enables us to chasten heart and body, to Him be praise; and for that very reason, while we do so, we must not cease rejoicing in Him. All through Lent we must rejoice, while we afflict ourselves. Though "many be called, but few chosen;" though all run in the race, but "one receiveth the prize;" though we must "so run that we may obtain; though we must be "temperate in all things;" and "keep under our body and bring it unto subjection,"

* 1 Tim. iv. 4. 8.

† Septuagesima.

lest we be castaways ; yet through God alone we can do this ; and while He is with us, we cannot but be joyful ; His absence only is a cause for sorrow. The Three Holy Children are said to have stood up in the midst of the fire, and to have called on all the works of God to rejoice with them ; on sun and moon, stars of heaven, nights and days, showers and dew, frost and cold, lightnings and clouds, mountains and hills, green things upon the earth, seas and floods, fowls of the air, beasts and cattle, and children of men,—to praise and bless the Lord, and magnify Him for ever. We have no such trial as they ; we have no such awful suspense as theirs, on entering the burning fiery furnace ; we attempt for the most part what we know ; we begin what we think we can go through. We can neither instance their faith nor equal their rejoicing ; yet we can imitate them so far, as to look abroad into this fair world, which God made “ very good,” while we mourn over the evil which Adam brought into it ; to hold communion with what we see, while we seek Him who is invisible ; to admire it, while we abstain from it ; to acknowledge God’s love, while we deprecate His wrath ; to confess that, many as are our sins, His grace is greater. Our sins are more in number than the hairs of our head ; yet even the hairs of our head are all numbered by Him. He counts our sins, and, as He counts, so can He forgive ; for that reckoning, great though it be, comes to an end ; but His mercies fail not, and His Son’s merits are infinite.

Let us, then, on this day, dwell upon a thought, which it will be a duty to carry with us through Lent, the thought of the blessings and mercies of which our present life is made up. St. Paul said that he had all, and abounded, and was full ; and this, in a day of persecution. Surely, if we have but religious hearts and eyes, we too must confess that our daily and hourly blessings in this life are not less than his. Let us recount some of them.

1. First, then, we ought to bless and praise God that we have the gift of life. By this I mean, not merely that we live, but for those blessings which are included in the notion of our living. He has made life in its very nature to imply the existence of certain blessings which are themselves a happiness, and which bring it to pass that, in spite of all evils, life in itself, except in rare cases, cannot be otherwise than desirable. We cannot live without the means of life ; without the means of life we should die ; and the means of life are means of pleasure. It might have so been ordered that life could not have been sustained without the use of such means as were indifferent, neither pleasurable nor painful,—or of means which were even painful ; as in the case of illness or disease ; when we actually find that we cannot preserve it without painful remedies. Now, supposing the ordinary ways of pre-

serving it had been what are now but extraordinary : supposing food were medicine ; supposing wounds or blows imparted health and strength. But it is not so. On the contrary, life consists in things pleasant ; it is sustained by blessings. And, moreover, the Gospel, by a solemn grant, guarantees these things to us. After the flood, God Almighty condescended to promise that there never should be such a flood again ; that seed time and harvest should not fail. He ratified the stability of nature by His own Word, and by that Word it is upheld. And, in like manner He has, in a special way, guaranteed to us in the Gospel that law of nature whereby good and pleasant gifts are included in our idea of life, and life becomes a blessing. He might, did He so will, sustain us Christians, not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of His mouth. But He has not done so. He has pledged to us those ordinary means of sustenance which we naturally like ; “ bread shall be given us ; our water shall be sure ; ” “ all these things shall be added unto us.” He has not indeed promised us what the world calls its great prizes ; He has not promised us those goods, so called, of which the goodness depends on the imagination ; He has not promised us large estates, magnificent domains, houses like palaces, sumptuous furniture, retainers and servants, chariots and horses, rank, name, credit, popularity, power, the deference of others, the indulgence of our wills, luxury, sensual enjoyments. These, on the contrary, He denies us ; and, withal, He declares, that specious and inviting as they are, really they are evil. But still He has promised that this shall be His rule,—that thus shall it be fulfilled to us as His ordinary providence,—that life shall not be a burden to us, but a blessing, and shall contain more to comfort than to afflict. And giving us as much as this, He bids us be satisfied with it ; He bids us confess that we “ have all ” when we have so much : that we “ abound ” when we have enough ; He promises us food, raiment, and lodging ; and He bids us, “ having food and raiment, therewith to be content.”* He bids us be content with those gifts, and withal unsolicitous about them ; tranquil, secure, and confident, because He has promised them ; He bids us be sure that we shall have so much, and not be disappointed that it is no more. Such is His merciful consideration of us ; He does not separate us from this world, though He calls us out of it ; He does not reject our old nature when He gives us a new one ; He does but redeem it from the curse, and purify it from the infection which came through Adam, and is none of His. He especially blesses the creation to our use, though we be regenerate. “ Every creature of God,” says

* 1 Tim. vi. 8.

the Apostle, "is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."* He does not bid us renounce the creation, but associates us with the most beautiful portions of it. He likens us to the flowers with which He has ornamented the earth, and to the birds that live solitary under heaven, and makes them the type of a Christian. He denies us Solomon's regal magnificence, to unite us to the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? . . . And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."†

Here then, surely, is a matter for joy and thankfulness at all seasons, and not the least at times, when, with a religious forbearance, and according to the will of the Giver, not from thanklessness but from fear, we, for a while, more or less withhold from ourselves His good gifts. Then, of all times, when we think it right to suspend our use of the means of life, so far as may not hurt that life, His gift, and to prove how pleasant is the using them by the pain of abstaining from them,—now especially, my brethren, in the weeks in prospect, when we shall be called on to try ourselves, as far as may be, by hunger, or cold, or watching, or seclusion, that we may be brought nearer to God,—let us now thank God that He has not put us into an evil world, or subjected us to a cruel master, but has given us a continual record of His own perfections in all that lies around us. Alas! it will be otherwise hereafter with those whom God puts out of His sight for ever. Their world will be evil; their life will be death; their rulers will be the devil and his angels; flames of fire and the lake of brimstone will be their meat and drink; the heaven above them will be brass; their earth will be dust and ashes; the blood in their veins will be as molten lead. Fearful thought! which it is not right to do more than glance at. Let us utter it, and pass by. Rather it is for us to rejoice that we are still in the light of His countenance, on His good earth, and under His warm sun. Let us thank Him that He gives us the fruits of the earth in their season; that He gives us "food out of the earth, and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make him a cheerful counte-

* 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

† Matt. vi. 25—29.

nance, and bread to strengthen man's heart."* Thus was it with our fathers of old time ; thus is it with us now. After Abraham had fought with the kings, Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine to refresh him. The Angels who visited him made themselves men, and ate of the calf which he dressed for them. Isaac blessed Jacob after the savoury meat. Joseph's brethren ate and drank and were merry with him. The seventy elders went up Mount Sinai with Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and they saw God, and moreover "did eat and drink." David, after his repentance, had "bread set before him, and he did eat." When Elijah went for his life, and requested that he might die, "An Angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat ;" and he did eat and drink, once and twice, and lay down to sleep between his meals ; and when he arose, he "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." St. Paul also, after his conversion and baptism, "received meat and was strengthened."†

2. Again, what a great blessing is that, of which I have just spoken in Elijah's case, the gift of sleep ! Almighty God does not suffer us to be miserable for a long while together, even when He afflicts us ; but He breaks our trial into portions ; take us out of this world ever and anon, and gives us a holy-day time, like children at school, in an unknown and mysterious country.

All this then must be borne in mind, in reflecting on those solemn and sobering truths concerning the Christian's calling, which it is necessary often to insist upon. It is often said, and truly, that the Christian is born to trouble,—that sorrow is the rule with him, and pleasure the exception. But when this is said, the question is one of seasons, circumstances, events, such things as are adventitious and additional to the gift of life itself. The Christian's *lot* is one of sorrow, but, as the regenerate *life* with him is happiness, so is the gift of natural life also. We live, therefore we are happy ; *upon* this life of ours come joys and sorrows ; and in proportion as we are favourites of God, it is sorrow that comes, not joy. Still, after all, considered in ourselves, that we live ; that God breathes in us ; that we exist in Him ; that we think and act ; that we have the means of life ; that we have food, and sleep, and raiment, and lodging ; and that we are not lonely, but in God's Church, and are sure of brethren by the very token of our having a Father which is in heaven ;—so far, rejoicing is the very condition of our being, and all pain is little more than external, not reaching to our inmost heart. So far all men almost are on a level, seasons of sickness excepted.

* Ps. civ. 14, 15.

† Gen. xiv. 18 ; xviii. 8 ; xxvii. 25 ; xliii. 34. Ex. xxiv. 11. 2 Sam. xii. 20. 1 Kings xix. 5—8. Acts ix. 19.

Even delicate health and feebleness of life does not preclude these pleasures. And as to seasons of sickness, or even long and habitual pain or disease, the good Lord can compensate for them in His own way by extraordinary supplies of grace, as in early times He made even the torments of Christians in persecution literally pleasant to them. He who so ordered it, that even the red hot iron did feel pleasant to the Martyrs after a while, cannot fail of means to support His servants when life becomes a burden. But, generally speaking, it is a happiness, and that to all ranks. High and low, rich and poor, have the same refreshment in their pilgrimage. Hunger is as pleasantly appeased by the low as by the high, on coarse fare as on delicate. Sleep is equally the comfort and recruiting of rich and poor. We eat, drink, and sleep, whether we are in sorrow or in joy, in anxiety or in hope. Our natural life is the type of our spiritual life, and thus, in a literal as well as higher sense, we may bless Him "who saveth our life from destruction, and crowneth us with mercy and loving-kindness; who satisfieth our mouth with good things, making us young and lusty as an eagle."*

3. Now, again, consider the blessings which we have in Christian brotherhood. In the beginning, woman was made, that man might not be alone, but might have a help meet for him; and our Lord promised that all who gave up this world and this world's kindred for Him, should "receive manifold more in this present time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions."† You see He mentions the troubles of Christians, which were their lot as Christians; but still these did not interfere with the prior law of their very nature, that they should not be friendless. As food and raiment are necessary conditions of life, society is an inseparable adjunct of it. God does not take away food and raiment when He gives grace, nor does He take away brotherhood. He removes from the world to put into the Church. Religion without a church is as unnatural as life without food and raiment. He began our life anew, but He built it up upon the same foundations; and as He did not strip us of our body, when He made us Christians, neither did He of social ties. Christ finds us in the double tabernacle, of a house of flesh and a house of brethren, and he sanctifies both, not pulls them down. Our first life is in ourselves; our second in our friends. They whom God forces to part with their near of kin, for His sake, find brethren in the spirit at their side. They who remain solitary, for His sake, have children in the spirit raised up to them. How should we thank God for this great benefit! Now especially, when we are soon to retire, more or less, into ourselves, and

* Ps. ciii. 4, 5.

† Mark x. 30.

to refrain from our ordinary intercourse with one another, let us acknowledge the blessing, whether of the holy marriage bond, or of family affection, or of the love of friends, which He so bounteously bestows. He gives, He takes away ; blessed be His Name. But He takes away to give again, and He withdraws one blessing to restore fourfold. Abraham offered his only son, and received Him back again at the Angel's voice. Isaac "took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her ; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." Jacob lost Joseph, and found him governor of Egypt. Job lost all his children, yet his end was more blessed than his beginning. We too, through God's mercy, whether we be young or old, whether we have many friends or few, if we be Christ's, shall all along our pilgrimage find those in whom we may live, who will love us and whom we may love, who will aid us, and help us forward, and comfort us, and close our eyes. For His love is a secret gift, which, unseen by the world, binds together those in whom it lives, and makes them live and sympathize in one another.

4. Again, let us bless and praise God for the present peace of the Church, and the freedom of speech and action which He has vouchsafed to us. There have been times, when to be a Christian, was to be an outcast and a criminal ; when, to profess the faith of the Saints, would have subjected us to bonds and imprisonment. Let us thank God that at present we have nothing to fear, but may serve Him zealously, "no man forbidding" us. No thanks indeed to the world, which has given us this peace, not from any love to the Church or the Truth, but from selfish and ungodly principles of its own ; but great thanks to God, who has made use of the world, and has overruled its course of opinion to our benefit. We have large and noble Churches to worship in ; we may go freely to worship when we will ; we may enjoy the advice of those who know better than ourselves ; we may speak our mind one to another ; we may move about freely ; we may hold intercourse with whom we will ; we may write what we will, explaining, defending, recommending, spreading the truth, without suffering or inconvenience. This is the blessing which we pray for in our Collects ; and wonderfully has God granted it for very many years past. We pray daily that God would "give peace in our time." We pray three times a week that "those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought ;" and "that, being hurt by no persecutions, we may evermore give thanks unto God in His Holy Church." We pray yearly that "the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by His governance, that His Church may joyfully serve Him in all godly quietness ;" and that He may "keep His household, the Church, in continual godliness, that through His

protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Him in good works, to the glory of His Name." Now all this is most wonderfully fulfilled to us at this day,—praised be His great mercy! You will ask, perhaps, whether too much prosperity is not undesirable for the Church?—It is so; but I am speaking, not of the Church, but of ourselves as individuals: what is dangerous to the body, may be a blessing to the separate members. As to ourselves, one by one, God has His own secret chastisements for us, which, if He loves us, He will apply when we need them; but, if we know how to use the blessing duly, it is, I say, a great gift, that we are allowed to serve God with such freedom and in such peace as are now vouchsafed us. Great mercy indeed, which we forget because we are used to it; which many prophets and righteous men in the first ages of the Gospel had not, yet which we have had from our youth up. We from our youth up have lived in peace; with no persecution, no terror, no hindrance in serving God. The utmost we have had to endure, is what is almost too trifling for a Christian to mention,—cold looks, or contempt, or ridicule, from those who have not the heart themselves to attempt the narrow way.

5. Lastly, and very briefly, my brethren, let us remind ourselves of our own privileges here in this place. How great is our privilege, my brethren!—every one of us enjoys the great privilege of daily Worship and weekly Communion. This great privilege God has given to me and to you,—let us enjoy it while we have it. Not any one of us knows how long it may be his own. Perhaps there is no one among us all, who can reckon upon it for a continuance. Perhaps, or rather probably, it is a bright spot in our lives. Perhaps we shall look upon these days or years, time hence; and then reflect, when all is over, how pleasant they were; how pleasant to come, day after day, quietly and calmly, to kneel before our Maker,—week after week, to meet our Lord and Saviour. How soothing will then be the remembrance of His past gifts? we shall remember how we got up early in the morning, and how all things, light or darkness, sun or air, cold or freshness, breathed of Him,—of Him, the Lord of glory, who stood over us, and came down upon us, and gave Himself to us, and poured forth milk and honey for our sustenance, though we saw Him not. Surely we have all, and abound: we are full.

SERMON XX.

ENDURANCE, THE CHRISTIAN'S PORTION.

GENESIS xlii. 36.

All these things are against me.

So spoke the Patriarch Jacob, when Joseph had been made away with, Simeon was detained in Egypt, Benjamin threatened, and his remaining sons suspected by him and distrusted; when out of doors, nay, at his door, was a grievous famine, enemies or strangers round about, evil in prospect, and in memory a number of sad remembrances to pain, not to cheer him,—the dreadful misconduct of his own family and its consequences, and, further back, the wrath of Esau, his separation from his father's house, his wanderings, and his ill-usage by Laban. From his youth upwards he had been full of sorrows, and he bore them with a troubled mind. His first words are, "If God will be with me . . . then shall the Lord be my God." His next, "Deliver me, I pray Thee." His next, "Ye have troubled me." His next, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." His next, "All these things are against me." And his next, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been."* Blow after blow, stroke after stroke, trouble came like hail. That one hail-stone falls is a proof, not that no more will come, but that others are coming surely; when we feel the first, we say, "*It begins to hail,*"—we do not argue that it is over, but that it is to come. Thus was it with Jacob: the storm muttered around him, and heavy drops fell while he was in his father's house; it drove him abroad. It did not cease because he was out in it; it did not end because it had begun. It continued, because it had begun; its beginning marked its presence; it began upon a law, which was extended over him in manhood also and old age, as in early youth. It was his calling to be in the storm: it was his very life to be a pil-

* Gen. xxviii. 20, 21; xxxii. 11; xxxiv. 30; xxxvii. 35; xlii. 36; xlvii. 9.

grimage; it was the very thread of the days of his years to be few and evil.

And what Jacob was all his life, that was his son Joseph at least in the early part of it; for thirteen years from seventeen to thirty, he was in trouble far greater than Jacob's;—in captivity, in slavery, in prison, in bonds so tight, that the iron is said to have entered into his soul. And what Joseph was in the beginning of life, such was Abraham, his forefather, in the latter half of it. For seventy-five years he lived in his "father's house;" but henceforward he was a wanderer. Thus did Almighty God, by the instance of the patriarchs of His ancient people, remind that people themselves that this world was not their rest; thus did He foreshadow that condition of life, which is not only a lesson, but a pattern to us, of our very state of life, "if we live godly in Christ Jesus."* He Himself, the Lord Incarnate, chose only to sojourn on earth; He had not where to lay His head. "Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach, for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."† In Jacob is prefigured the Christian. He said, "All these things are against me;" and what he said in a sort of dejection of mind, that must the Christian say, not in dejection, not sorrowfully, or passionately, or in complaint, or in impatience, but calmly, as if confessing a doctrine. "All these things are against me;" but it is my portion; they are against me, that I may fight against them and overcome them. If there were no enemy, there could be no conflict; were there no trouble, there could be no faith; were there no trial, there could be no love; were there no fear, there could be no hope. Hope, faith, and love, are weapons, and weapons imply foes and encounters; and, relying on my weapons, I will glory in my suffering, being "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."‡

That trouble and sorrow are in some especial sense the lot of the Christian, is plain from such passages of Scripture as the following:—For instance, St. Paul and St. Barnabas remind the disciples "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Again, St. Paul says, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Again, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." Again, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." Again, St. Peter, "If, when you do well,

* 2 Tim. iii. 12.

† Heb. xiii. 13, 14.

‡ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God ; for even herunto were ye called." And our Saviour declares, that those who have given up the relations of this world "for His sake and the Gospel's" shall receive "an hundred-fold" now, "with persecutions." And St. Paul speaks in his own case of his "perils," by sea and land, from friend and foe, without and within him, of the body and of the soul. Yet he adds, "I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities."*

To passages, however, like these, it is natural to object that they do not apply to the present time ; that they apply to a time of persecution, which is past and over ; and that men enter the kingdom now, without the afflictions which it involved. What we see, it may be said, is a disproof of so sad and severe a doctrine. In this age, and in this country, the Church surely is in peace ; rights are secured to it, and privileges added. Christians now, to say the very least, have liberty of person and property ; they live without disquietude, and they die happily. Nay, they have much more than mere toleration, they have possession of the whole country ; there are none but Christians in it ; and if they suffer persecution, it must be (as it were) self-inflicted from the hands of each other. Christianity is the law of the land ; its ministry is a profession, its offices are honours, its name a recommendation. So far from Christians being in trial because they are Christians, those who are not Christians, infidels and profligates, they are under persecution. Under disabilities indeed these are, and justly ; but it would be as true to say that Christians are justly in trouble, as to say that they are in trouble at all. What confessorship is there in a man's putting himself in the front of the Christian fight, when that front is a benefice or a dignity ? Rulers of the Church were aforetime marks for the persecutor ; now they are but forced into temporal rank and power. Aforetime, the cross was in the inventory of holy treasures, handed down from Bishop to Bishop ; but now what self-denial is there in the Apostolate, what bitterness in Christ's cup, what marks of the Lord Jesus in the touch of His Hand, what searching keenness in His sacred Breath ? Of old time, indeed, as the Spirit forthwith drave Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, so they, also, who received the Almighty Comforter, in any of His high gifts, were at once among the wild beasts of Ephesus, or amid the surges of the sea ; but there are no such visible proofs now of the triumph of God's grace, humbling the individual, while using him for heavenly purposes.

* Acts xiv. 22. Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 12 ; iii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 20. Matt. xix. 29. Mark x. 30. 2 Cor. xi. 30.

This is what objectors may say ; and, in corroboration, they may tell us to look at the feelings of the world towards the Church and its sacred offices, and to judge for ourselves whether they have not the common sense of mankind with them. For is not the ministry of the Church what is called an easy profession ? Do we not see it undertaken by those who love quiet, or who are unfit for business ; by those who are less keen, less active-minded, less venturous than others ? Does it not lead rather to a land of Canaan, as of old time, than to the narrow rugged way and the thorny couch of the gospel ? Has it not fair pastures, and pleasant resting places, and calm refreshing streams, and milk and honey flowing, according to the promise of the Old Covenant, rather than that baptism and that draught which is the glory of the New ? Facts then, it will be said, refute such notions of the suffering character of the Christian Church. It suffered at first,—suffering was the price of its triumphing ; and since that, it has ceased to suffer. It is as truly in peace now, as it was truly in suffering then ;—one might as well deny that it did suffer, as that it is in peace ; and to apply texts which speak of what it was then to what it is now, is unreal, offends some hearers, and excites ridicule in others. This is what may be said.

Yet is it so indeed ? Let us look into the Bible again. Are we to go by faith or by sight ?—for surely, whatever conclusions follow from what we see, these cannot undo what is written. What is written remains ; and if sight is against it, we must suppose that there is some way of solving the difficulty, though we may not see how ; and we must try, as well as we can, to solve it in our own case.

Let us, I say, consider the words of Scripture again. Surely, if endurance be not in some sense or other the portion of Christians, the whole New Testament itself has but a temporary meaning. It is all built upon this doctrine as a groundwork. If “ the present distress,”* of which St. Paul speaks, does not denote the ordinary state of the Christian Church, the New Testament is scarcely written for us, but must be remodelled before it can apply. There are men of the world in this day who are attempting to supersede the precepts of Christ, about almsgiving and the maintenance of the poor. We are accustomed to object, that they contravene Scripture. Again, we hear of men drawing up a Church government for themselves, or omitting Sacraments, or modifying doctrines. We say they do not read Scripture rightly. They answer, perhaps, that Scripture commands or countenances many things which are not binding on us eighteen hun-

* 1 Cor. vii. 26.

dred years after. They consider that the management of the poor, the form of the Church, the power of the state over it, the nature of its faith, or the choice of its ordinances, are not points on which we need rigidly keep to Scripture; that times have changed. This is what they say; and can we find fault with them if we ourselves allow that the New Testament is a dead letter in another most essential part of it? Is it strange that they should think that the world may now tyrannize over the Church, when we allow that the Church may now indulge in the world? Surely they do but make a fair bargain with us; both they and we put aside Scripture, and then agree together, we to live in ease, and they to rule. We have taken the world's pay, and must not grudge its yoke. Independence surely is not the Church's privilege, unless hardship is her portion.

Well, and perhaps affliction, hardship, distress, ill usage, evil report, are her portion, both promised and bestowed, though at first sight they may seem not to be. What proof is there that temporal happiness was the gift of the Law, which will not avail for temporal adversity being that of the Gospel? You say the Jews had the promise of this world. True. But look at their history. Is that promise fulfilled on its surface? Had they not long periods of captivity, war, famine, pestilence, weakness, internal division? Look at their history as a whole. Is it not very like other histories? Had not their power a beginning, a progress, and an end? Did they not pass through those successive stages which other states pass through? What prosperity had they, to go by appearances, which other states had not? What trouble had other states which they were spared? If, then, the face of things be taken to prove that the Christian Church is not born to trouble, would it not also prove that the Jewish Church was not allotted prosperity? And if, in spite of appearances, we yet say that the Israelites had special temporal blessings, why may we not, in spite of the appearance, say that Christians have special temporal trials?

You will say, perhaps, that the Jewish promise was suspended on a condition, the condition of obedience, and that the Jews forfeited the reward, because they did not merit it. True; let it be so. And what hinders, in like manner, if Christians are in prosperity, not in adversity, that it is because they too have forfeited the promise and privilege of affliction by disobedience? And what hinders that, as, in spite of the sins of the people, the Jewish Church still in some sufficient sense did obtain the temporal promise; so, in like manner, in spite of the sins of the multitude of Christians, the Christian Church as a whole, and her true children in particular, may partake in the promise of distress?

It is very difficult then to argue from what we see, and there are

many ways in which what is written may be fulfilled in spite, or by means of it. All that clearly can be pointed out is the word of promise. It was said of Israel, "He loved the people; all His saints are in thy hand; and they sat down at thy feet; every one shall receive of thy words. . . . Let Reuben live and not die; and let not his men be few. . . . Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people. Let his hands be sufficient for him, and be Thou a help to him from his enemies." And of Levi: "Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be upon Thy Holy One. . . . Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." And of Benjamin: "The Beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him." And of Joseph: "Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious things brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things brought forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof." And of Zebulon: "Rejoice, Zebulon, in thy going out, and, Issachar, in thy tents. . . . they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand." And, "Blessed be he that enlargeth Gad; he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head." "And, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the west and the south." And, "Let Asher be blessed with children; thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." And of all of them together it was said, "Israel shall dwell in safety alone; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; and his heavens shall drop down dew."* These were the bright and pleasant things promised to the first people of God, in the plains of Moab, on their entering into the land. And now, in turn, what did the second great Prophet of the Church declare, when He was set upon the mount, with the people around Him, and published His covenant of grace? "He opened His mouth and said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek. . . . Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. . . . Blessed are the merciful. . . . Blessed are the pure in heart. . . . Blessed are the peacemakers." And lastly, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice, and be ex-

* Deut. xxxiii.

ceeding glad ; for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you." And, by contrast, He added, " But wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation. Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger. Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets.*"

At another time He spoke thus : " Sell that ye have, and give alms." " If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." " It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." " If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." And, in a word, the doctrine of the Gospel, and the principle of it, is thus briefly stated by the Apostle, in the words of the Wise man : " Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. . . . If ye be without chastisement, *whereof all are partakers*, then are ye bastards, and not sons."† Can words speak it plainer, that, as certainly as temporal prosperity is the gift of the Law, so also are hardship and distress the gift of the Gospel ?

Take up thy portion, then, Christian soul, and weigh it well, and learn to love it. Thou wilt find, if thou art Christ's, in spite of what the world fancies, that after all, even at this day, endurance, in a special sense, is the lot of those who offer themselves to be servants of the King of sorrows. There is an inward world, which none sees but those who belong to it ; and though the outside robe be many-coloured, like Joseph's coat, inside it is lined with camel's hair, or sackcloth, fitting those who desire to be one with Him who fared hardly in the wilderness, in the mountain, and on the sea. There is an inward world into which they enter who come near to Christ, though to men in general they seem the same as before. They hold the same place as before in the world's society ; their employments are the same, their ways, their comings in and goings out. If they were high in rank, they are still high ; if they were in active life, they are still active ; if they were wealthy, they still have wealth. They have still great friends, powerful connexions, ample resources, fair name, in the world's eye ; but, if they have drunk of Christ's cup, and tasted the bread of His Table in sincerity, it is not with them as in time past. A change has

* Matt. v. 2—12. Luke vi. 24—26.

† Luke xii. 33. Matt. xix. 21. 24 ; xx. 27 ; xvi. 24. Heb. xii. 6—8.

come over them, unknown indeed to themselves, except in its effects, but they have a portion in destinies which other men have not, and, as having destinies, they have conflicts also. They drank what looked like a draught of this world, but it associated them in hopes and fears, trials and purposes, above this world. They came as for a blessing, and they have found a work. They are soldiers in Christ's army; they fight against "things that are seen," and they have "all these things against them." To their surprise, as time goes on, they find that their lot is changed. They find that in one shape or other adversity happens to them. If they refuse to afflict themselves, God afflicts them. ✓ One blow falls, they are startled; it passes over, it is well; they expect nothing more. Another comes; they wonder: "why is this?" they ask; they think that the first should be their security against the second; they bear it, however, and it passes too. Then a third comes; they almost murmur; they have not yet mastered the great doctrine that endurance is their portion. O simple soul, is it not the law of thy being to endure since thou camest to Christ? Why camest thou but to endure? Why didst thou taste His heavenly feast, but that it might work in thee? Why didst thou kneel beneath His hand, but that He might leave on thee the print of His wounds? Why wonder, then, that one sorrow does not buy off the next? Does one drop of rain absorb the second? Does the storm cease because it has begun? Understand thy place in God's kingdom, and rejoice, not complain, that in thy day thou hast thy lot with Prophets and Apostles. Envy not the gay and thriving world. Religious persons ask, "Why are we so marked out for crosses? Others get on in the world; others are prosperous; their schemes turn out well, and their families settle happily; there is no anxiety, no bereavement among them, while the world fights against us." This is what they sometimes say, though with some exaggeration certainly, for almost all men, sooner or later, have their troubles; and Christians, as well as others, have their continual comforts. But what then, be it ever so true? if so, it is but what was foretold long ago, and even under the Law fulfilled in its degree. "They have children at their desire, and leave the rest of their substance for their babes." "They are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong. They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men. . . . Their eyes swell with fatness, they do even what they lust Lo these are the ungodly, these prosper in the world, and these have riches in possession." Such is the portion, such the punishment of those who forsake their God. "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward."*

* Ps. xvii. 15; lxxiii. 4—12. Matt. vi. 5.

When, then, my brethren, it is objected that times are changed since the Gospel was first preached, and that what Scripture says of the lot of Christians does not apply to us, make answer, that the Church of Christ doubtless is in high estate everywhere, and so must be, for it is written, "I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Yet that while she maintains her ground, she ever suffers *in* maintaining it; she has to fight the good fight, in order to maintain it; she fights and she suffers, in proportion as she plays her part well; and if she is without suffering, it is because she is slumbering. Her doctrines and precepts never can be palatable to the world; and if the world does not persecute, it is because she does not preach. And so of her individual members: they in their own way suffer; not after her manner, perhaps, nor for the same reason, nor in the same degree, but more or less, as being under the law of suffering which Christ began. Judge not then by outward appearance; think not that His servants are in ease and security because things look smooth, else you will be startled, perhaps, and offended, when suffering falls upon you. Temporal blessings, indeed, He gives to you and to all men in abundance; "He maketh His sun to rise upon the just and unjust;" but in your case it will be "houses and brethren and lands, with persecutions." Judge not by appearance, but be sure that, even when things seem to brighten and smile upon God's true servants, there is much within to try them, though you see it not. Of old time they wore clothing of hair and sackcloth under rich robes. Men do not observe this custom now-a-days; but be quite sure still, that there are as many sharp distresses underneath the visible garb of things, as if they did. Many a secret ailment or scarcely-observed infirmity exercises him, who has it, better than thorns or knotted cord. Many a silent grief, lying like lead within the breast, or like cold ice upon the heart. Many a sad secret, which a man dare not tell lest he should find no sympathy. Many a laden conscience, laden because the owner of it has turned to Christ, and which he would not have felt, had he kept from Him. Many an apprehension for the future, which cannot be spoken; many a bereavement which has robbed the world's gifts of their pleasant savour, and leads the heart but to sigh at the sight of them. No; never while the Church lasts, will the words of old Jacob be reversed,—all things here are against us but God; but if God be for us, who can really be against us? If He is in the midst of us, how shall we be moved? If Christ has died and risen again, what death can come upon us, though we be made to die daily? what sorrow, pain, humiliation, trial, but must end as His has ended, in a continual resurrection into His new world, and in a nearer and nearer

approach to Him? He pronounced a blessing over His Apostles, and they have scattered it far and wide all over the earth unto this day. It runs as follows: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."*

SERMON XXI.

AFFLICTION, A SCHOOL OF COMFORT.

2 CORINTHIANS i. 4.

Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

If there is one point of character more than another which belonged to St. Paul, and discovers itself in all he said and did, it was his power of sympathizing with his brethren, nay, with all classes of men. He went through trials of every kind, and this was their issue, to let him into the feelings, and thereby to introduce him to the hearts of high and low, Jew and Gentile. He knew how to persuade, for he knew where lay the perplexity; he knew how to console, for he knew the sorrow. His spirit within him was as some delicate instrument, which, as the weather changed about him, as the atmosphere was moist or dry, hot or cold, accurately marked all its variations, and guided him what to do. "To the Jews he became as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the Law, as under the Law, that he might gain them that were under the Law: to them that were without Law, as without Law, that he might gain them that were without Law. To the weak," he says, "became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." And so again, in another place, after having recounted his various trials by sea and land, in the bleak wilderness and the stifling prison, from

* John xiv. 27; xvi. 33.

friends and strangers, he adds, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities." Hence, in the Acts of the Apostles, when he saw his brethren weeping, though they could not divert him from his purpose, which came from God, yet he could not keep from crying out, "What mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus." And even of his own countrymen who persecuted him, he speaks in the most tender and affectionate terms, as understanding well where they stood, and what their view of the Gospel was. "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." And again, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I *bear them record* that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." And hence so powerful was he in speech with them, wherever they were not reprobate, that even King Agrippa, after hearing a few words of St. Paul's own history, exclaimed, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian!"* And what he was in persuasion, such he was in consolation. He himself gives this reason for his trials in the text, speaking of Almighty God's comforting him in all his tribulation, that he might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God.

Such was the great Apostle St. Paul, the Apostle of grace, whom we hold in especial honour in the early part of the year. At this season we commemorate his conversion; and at this season we give attention, more than ordinary, to his Epistles. And on Sexagesima Sunday we almost keep another Festival in his memory, the Epistle for the day being expressly on the subject of his trials. He was beaten, he was scourged, he was chased to and fro, he was imprisoned, he was shipwrecked, he was in this life of all men most miserable, that he might understand how poor a thing mortal life is, and might learn to contemplate and describe fitly the glories of the life immortal.

"Experience," he tells us elsewhere, "worketh hope,"—that grace which of all others most tends to comfort and assuage sorrow. In somewhat a similar way our Lord says to St. Peter, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."† Nay, the same law was fulfilled,

* 1 Cor. ix. 20—22. 2 Cor. xi. 29, 30. Acts xxi. 13. Rom. ix. 3; x. 1, 2. Acts xxvi. 28.

† Luke xxii. 31, 32.

not only in the case of Christ's servants, but even He Himself, "who knoweth the hearts," condescended, by an ineffable mystery, to learn to strengthen man, by the experiencing of man's infirmities. "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that He Himself suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." "We have not a High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."*

Such is one chief benefit of painful trial, of whatever kind, which it may not be unsuitable to enlarge on. Man is born to "trouble, as the sparks fly upward." More or less, we all have our severe trials of pain and sorrow. If we go on for some years in the world's sunshine, it is only that troubles, when they come should fall heavier. Such at least is the general rule. Sooner or later we fare as other men; happier than they, only if we learn to bear our portion more religiously; and more favoured, if we fall in with those who themselves have suffered, and can aid us with their sympathy and their experience. And then, while we profit from what they can give us, we may learn from them freely to give what we have freely received, comforting in turn others with the comfort which our brethren have given us from God.

Now in speaking of the benefits of trial and suffering, we should of course never forget that these things by themselves have no power to make us holier or more heavenly. They make many men morose, selfish, and envious. The only sympathy they create in many minds, is the wish that others should suffer with them, not they with others. Affliction, when love is away, leads a man to wish others to be as he is; it leads to repining, malevolence, hatred, rejoicing in evil. "Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?" said the princes of the nations to the fallen king of Babylon. The devils are not incited by their torments to any endeavour but that of making others devils also. Such is the effect of pain and sorrow, when unsanctified by God's saving grace. And this is instanced very widely and in a variety of cases. All afflictions of the flesh, such as the Gospel enjoins, and St. Paul practised, watchings and fastings, and subjecting of the body, have no tendency whatever in themselves to make men better; they often have made men worse; they often (to appearance) have left them just as they were before. They are no sure test of holiness and true faith, taken by themselves. A man may

* Heb. ii. 17; iv. 15.

be most austere in his life, and, by that very austerity, learn to be cruel to others, not tender. And, on the other hand (what seems strange,) he may be austere in his personal habits, and yet be a waverer and a coward in his conduct. Such things have been,—I do not say they are likely in this state of society,—but I mean, it should ever be borne in mind, that the severest and most mortified life is as little a passport to heaven, or a criterion of saintliness, as benevolence is, or usefulness, or amiableness. Self-discipline is a necessary condition, but not a sure sign of holiness. It may leave a man worldly, or it may make him a tyrant. It is only in the hands of God that it is God's instrument. It only ministers to God's purposes when God uses it. It is only when grace is in the heart, when power from above dwells in a man, that any thing outward or inward turns to his salvation. Whether persecution, or famine, or the sword, they as little bring the soul to Christ, as they separate it from Him. He alone can work, and He can work through all things. He can make the stones bread. He can feed us with "every word which proceedeth from his mouth." He could, did He so will, make us calm, resigned, tender-hearted, and sympathizing, without trial; but it is His will ordinarily to do so by means of trial. Even He Himself, when He came on earth, condescended to gain knowledge by experience; and what He did Himself, that He makes His brethren do.

And while affliction does not necessarily make us gentle and kind, nay, it may be, even make us stern and cruel, the want of affliction does not mend matters. Sometimes we look with pleasure upon those who never have been afflicted. We look with a smile of interest upon the smooth brow and open countenance, and our hearts thrill within us at the ready laugh or the piercing glance. There is a buoyancy and freshness of mind in those who have never suffered, which, beautiful as it is, is perhaps scarcely suitable and safe in sinful man. It befits an Angel; it befits very young persons and children, who have never been delivered over to their three great enemies. I will not dare to deny that there are those whom white garments and unfading chaplets show that they have a right thus to rejoice always, even till God takes them. But this is not the case of the many, whom earth soils, and who lose their right to be merry-hearted. In them lightness of spirits degenerates into rudeness, want of feeling, and wantonness; such is the change, as time goes on, and their hearts become less pure and childlike. Pain and sorrow are the almost necessary medicines of the impetuosity of nature. Without these, men, though men, are like spoilt children; they act as if they considered every thing must give way to their own wishes and conveniences. They rejoice in their

youth. They become selfish ; and it is difficult to say which selfishness is the more distressing and disagreeable, self in high spirits, or self in low spirits ; self in joy, or self in sorrow ; in the rude health of nature or in the languor and fretfulness of trial. It is difficult to say which will comfort the worse, hearts hard from suffering, or hard from having never suffered : cruel despair, which rejoices in misery, or cruel pride, which is impatient at the sight of it. The cruelty, indeed, of the despairing is the more hateful, for it is more after Satan's pattern, who feels the less for others, the more he suffers himself ; yet the cruelty of the prosperous and wanton is like the excesses of the elements, or of brute animals, not designed, more at random, yet perhaps even more keen and trying to those who incur it.

Such is worldly happiness and worldly trial ; but Almighty God, while He chose the latter as the portion of His Saints, sanctified it by His heavenly grace, to be their great benefit. He rescues them from the selfishness of worldly comfort without surrendering them to the selfishness of worldly pain. He brings them into pain, that they may be like what Christ was, and may be led to think of Him, not of themselves. He brings them into trouble, that they may be near Him. When they mourn, they are more intimately in his presence than they are at any other time. Bodily pain, anxiety, bereavement, distress, are to them His forerunners. It is a solemn thing, while it is a privilege, to look upon those whom He thus visits. Why is it that men would look with fear and silence at the sight of the spirit of some friend departed, coming to them from the grave ? Why would they abase themselves and listen awfully to any message he brought them ? Because he would seem to come from the very presence of God. And in like manner, when a man, in whom dwells His grace, is lying on the bed of suffering, or when he has been stripped of his friends and is solitary, he has, in a peculiar way, tasted of the powers of the world to come, and exhorts and consoles with authority. He who has been long under the rod of God, becomes God's possession. He bears in his body marks, and is sprinkled with drops, which nature could not impart to him. He comes "from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," and it is easy to see with whom He has been conversing. He seems to say to us in the words of the Prophet, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not unto light. . . He hath bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow."* And they who see him, gather around like Job's acquaintance, speaking no word to him, yet

* Lam. iii. 1, 2, 12.

more reverently than if they did; looking at him with fear, yet with confidence, with fellow-feeling, yet with resignation, as one who is under God's teaching and training for the work of consolation towards his brethren. Him will they seek when trouble comes on themselves; turning from all such as delighted them in their prosperity, the great, or the wealthy, or the man of mirth and song, or of wit, or of resource, or of dexterity, or of knowledge; by a natural instinct turning to those for consolation whom the Lord has heretofore tried by similar troubles. Surely this is a great blessing and cause of glorying, to be thus consecrated by affliction as a minister of God's mercies to the afflicted.

Some such thoughts as these may be humbly entertained by every one of us, when brought even into any ordinary pain or trouble. Doubtless if we are properly minded, we shall be very loth to take to ourselves titles of honour. We shall be slow to believe that we are specially beloved by Christ. But at least we may have the blessed certainty that we are made instruments for the consolation of others. Without impatiently settling any thing absolutely about our own real state in God's sight, and how it will fare with us at the last day, at least we may allow ourselves to believe that we are at present evidently blessed by being made subservient to His purposes of mercy to others; as washing the disciples' feet, and pouring into their wounds oil and wine. So we shall say to ourselves, "Thus far, merciful Saviour, we have attained; not to be assured of our salvation, but of our usefulness. So far we know, and enough surely for sinful man, that we are allowed to promote His glory who died for us." Taught by our own pain, our own sorrow, nay, by our own sin, we shall have hearts and minds exercised for every service of love towards those who need it. We shall in one measure be comforters after the image of the Almighty Paraclete, and that in all senses of the word; advocates, assistants, soothing aids. Our words and advice, our very manner, voice, and look will be gentle and tranquillizing, as of those who have borne their cross after Christ. We shall not pass by His little ones rudely, as the world does. The voice of the widow and the orphan, the poor and destitute, will at once reach our ears, however low they speak. Our hearts will open towards them; our word and deed befriend them. The ruder passions of man's nature, pride and anger, envy and strife, which so disorder the Church, these will be quelled and brought under in the case of other men, by the earnestness and kindness of our admonitions. Thus, instead of being the selfish creatures which we were by nature, grace, acting through suffering, tends to make us ready teachers and witnesses of Truth to all men. Time was when, even at the most necessary times, we found it difficult to speak of heaven to another; our

mouth seemed closed, even when our heart was full ; but now our affection is eloquent, and “out of the abundance of the heart our mouth speaketh.” Blessed portion indeed, thus to be tutored in the sweetest, softest strains of Gospel truth, and to range over the face of the earth pilgrims and sojourners, with winning voices, singing, as far as in the flesh it is possible to sing, the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb ;* severed from ties of earth by the trials we have endured, without father, without mother, without abiding place, as that patriarch whom St. Paul speaks of, and, like him, allowed to bring forth bread and wine to refresh the weary soldiers of the most High God. Such too was our Lord’s forerunner, the holy Baptist, an austere man, cut off from among his brethren, living in the wilderness, feeding on harsh fare, yet so far removed from sternness towards those who sincerely sought the Lord, that his preaching was almost described in prophecy as the very language of consolation, “Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people . . . speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.”

Such was the high temper of mind instanced in our Lord and His Apostles, and thereby impressed upon the Church of Christ. And for this we may thank God, that much as the Church has erred in various ways since her setting up, this great truth she never has forgotten, that we must all “take up our cross daily,” and “through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” She has never forgotten that she was set apart for a comforter of the afflicted, and that to comfort well we must first be afflicted ourselves. St. Paul was consecrated by suffering to be an Apostle of Christ ; by fastings, by chastisements, by self-denials for his brethren’s sake, by his forlorn, solitary life, thus did he fill up day by day those intervals of respite which the fury of his persecutors permitted. And so the Church Catholic after him has never forgotten that ease was a sin, favoured as she might be with peace from external enemies. Even when riches and honours flowed in upon her, still has she always proclaimed that affliction was her proper portion. She has felt she could not perform the office of a comforter, if she enjoyed this world ; and, though doubtless her separate branches have at times forgotten this truth, yet it remains, and is transmitted from age to age ; and though she has had many false sons, yet even they have often been obliged to profess what they did not practise. This indeed is strange news to the world, who are bent on gratifying themselves, and who think they have gained a point, and have just cause for congratulation, when they have found out a way of saving themselves trouble, and of adding to their luxuries and conveniences. But those who are set on their own

ease, most certainly are bad comforters of others ; thus the rich man, who fared sumptuously every day, let Lazarus lie at his gate, and left him to be “ comforted ” after this life by Angels. As to comfort the poor and afflicted is the way to heaven, so to have affliction ourselves is the way to comfort them.

And, lastly, let us ever anxiously remember that affliction is sent for our own personal good also. Let us fear, lest after we have ministered to others, we ourselves should be cast-aways ; lest our gentleness, consideration, and patience, which are so soothing to them, yet should be separated from that inward faith and strict conscientiousness which alone unites us to Christ ;—lest, in spite of all the good we do to others, yet we should have some secret sin, some unresisted evil within us, which separates us from Him. Let us pray Him who sends us trial, to send us a pure heart and honesty of mind wherewith to bear it.

SERMON XXII.

THE THOUGHT OF GOD, THE STAY OF THE SOUL.

ROMANS viii. 15.

Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

WHEN Adam fell, his soul lost its true strength ; he forfeited the inward light of God’s presence, and became the wayward, fretful, excitable, and miserable being which his history has shown him to be ever since ; with alternate strength and feebleness, nobleness and meanness, energy in the beginning and failure in the end. Such was the state of his soul in itself, not to speak of the divine wrath upon it, which followed, or was involved in the divine withdrawal. It lost its spiritual life and health, which was necessary to complete its nature, and to enable it to fulfil the ends for which it was created,—which was necessary both for its moral integrity and its happiness ; and as if faint, hungry, or sick, it could no longer stand upright, but sank on the ground. Such is the state in which every one of us lies as born into the world ; and Christ

has come to reverse this state, and restore us the great gift which Adam lost in the beginning. Adam fell from his Creator's favour to be a bond-servant ; and Christ has come to set us free again, to impart to us the Spirit of adoption, whereby we become God's children, and again approach Him as our Father.

I say, by birth we are in a state of defect and want ; we have not all that is necessary for the perfection of our nature. As the body is not complete in itself, but requires the soul to give it a meaning, so again the soul, till God is present with it and manifested in it, has faculties and affections without a ruling principle, object, or purpose. Such it is by birth, and this Scripture signifies to us by many figures ; sometimes calling human nature blind, sometimes hungry, sometimes unclothed, and calling the gift of the Spirit light, health, food, warmth, and raiment ; all by way of teaching us what our real state is, and what our gratitude should be to Him who has brought us into a new state. For instance, "Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked : I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, . . . and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Again, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Again, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Again, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And in the book of Psalms, "They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of Thy house ; and Thou shalt give them drink of Thy pleasures as out of the river. For with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy Light shall we see light." And in another Psalm, "My soul shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth Thee with joyful lips." And so again, in the Prophet Jeremiah, "I will satiate the souls of the priests with fatness ; and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness. . . . I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."*

Now the doctrine which these passages contain is often truly expressed thus : that the soul of man is made for the contemplation of its Maker ; and that nothing short of that high contemplation is its happiness ; that, whatever it may possess besides, it is unsatisfied till it is

* Rev. iii. 17, 18. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. v. 14. John iv. 14. Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9 ; lxiii. 5. Jer xxxi. 14. 25.

vouchsafed God's presence, and lives in the light of it. There are many aspects in which the same solemn truth may be viewed ; there are many ways in which it may be signified. I will now dwell upon it as I have been stating it.

I say, then, that the happiness of the soul consists in the exercise of the affections ; not in sensual pleasures, not in activity, not in excitement, not in self-esteem, not in the consciousness of power, not in knowledge ; in none of these things lies our happiness, but in our affections being elicited, employed, supplied. As hunger and thirst, as taste, sound, and smell, are the channels through which this bodily frame receives pleasure, so the affections are the instruments by which the soul has pleasure. When they are exercised duly, it is happy ; when they are undeveloped, restrained, or thwarted, it is not happy. This is our real and true bliss, not to know, or to affect, or to pursue ; but to love, to hope, to joy, to admire, to revere, to adore. Our real and true bliss lies in the possession of those objects on which our hearts may rest and be satisfied.

Now, if this be so, here is at once a reason for saying that the thought of God, and nothing short of it, is the happiness of man ; for though there is much besides to serve as subject of knowledge, or motive for action, or instrument of excitement, yet the affections require a something more vast and more enduring than any thing created. What is novel and sudden excites, but does not influence ; what is pleasurable or useful raises no awe ; self moves no reverence, and mere knowledge kindles no love. He alone is sufficient for the heart who made it. I do not say, of course, that nothing short of the Almighty Creator can awaken and answer to our love, reverence, and trust ; man can do this for man. Man doubtless is an object to rouse his brother's love, and repays it in his measure. Nay, it is a great duty, one of the two chief duties of religion, thus to be minded towards our neighbour. But I am not speaking here of what we can do, or ought to do, but what it is our happiness to do ; and surely it may be said that though the love of the brethren, the love of all men, be one half of our obedience, yet exercised by itself, were that possible, which it is not, it were no part of our reward. And for this reason, if for no other, that our hearts require something more permanent and uniform than man can be. We gain much for a time from fellowship with each other. It is a relief to us, as fresh air to the fainting, or meat and drink to the hungry, or a flood of tears to the heavy in mind. It is a soothing comfort to have those whom we may make our confidants ; a comfort to have those to whom we may confess our faults ; a comfort to have those to whom we may look for sympathy. Love of home and family in these and other

ways is sufficient to make this life tolerable to the multitude of men, which otherwise it would not be ; but still, after all, our affections exceed such exercise of them, and demand what is more stable. Do not all men die ? are they not taken from us ? are they not as uncertain as the grass of the field ? We do not give our hearts to things inanimate, because these have no permanence in them. We do not place our affections in sun, moon, and stars, or this rich and fair earth, because all things material come to nought, and vanish like day and night. Man, too, though he has an intelligence within him, yet in his best estate is altogether vanity. If our happiness consists in our affections being employed and recompensed, "man that is born of a woman" cannot be our happiness ; for how can he stay another, who "continueth not in one stay" himself ?

But there is another reason why God alone is the happiness of our souls, to which I wish rather to direct attention :—the contemplation of Him, and nothing but it, is able fully to open and relieve the mind, to unlock, occupy, and fix our affections. We may indeed love things created with great intenseness, but such affection, when disjoined from the love of the Creator, is like a stream running in a narrow channel, impetuous, vehement, turbid. The heart runs out, as it were, only at one door ; it is not an expanding of the whole man. Created natures cannot open us, or elicit the ten thousand mental senses which belong to us, and through which we really live. None but the presence of our Maker can enter us ; for to none besides can the whole heart in all its thoughts and feelings be unlocked and subjected. "Behold," He says, "I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." "My father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."* It is this feeling of simple and absolute confidence and communion, which soothes and satisfies those to whom it is vouchsafed. We know that even our nearest friends enter into us but partially, and hold intercourse with us only at times ; whereas the consciousness of a perfect and enduring Presence, and it alone keeps the heart open. Withdraw the Object on which it rests, and it will relapse again into its state of confinement and constraint ; and in proportion as it is limited, either to certain seasons or to certain affections, the heart is straitened and distressed. If it be not over bold to say it, He who is Infinite can alone be its measure ; He alone can answer to the mysterious assemblage of feelings and thoughts which it has within it. "There is no creature

* Rev. iii. 20. John xiv. 23. Gal. iv. 6. 1 John iii. 20.

that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”*

This is what is meant by the peace of a good conscience ; it is the habitual consciousness that our hearts are open to God, with a desire that they should be open. It is a confidence in God, from a feeling that there is nothing in us which we need be ashamed or afraid of. You will say that no man on earth is in such a state ; for we are all sinners, and that daily. It is so ; certainly we are quite unfitted to endure God’s all-searching Eye, to come into direct contact (if I may so speak) with His glorious presence, without any medium of communion between Him and us. But, first, there may be degrees of this confidence in different men, though the perfection of it in none. And, again, God in His great mercy, as we all well know, has revealed to us that there is a Mediator between the sinful soul and Himself. And as His merits most wonderfully intervene between our sins and God’s judgment, so the thought of those merits, when present with the Christian, enables him, in spite of his sins, to lift up his heart to God ; and believing, as he does, that he is (to use Scripture language) in Christ, or, in other words, that he addresses Almighty God, not face to face, but in and through Christ, he can bear to submit and open his heart to God, and wish it open. For while he is very conscious both of original and actual sin, yet still a feeling of his own sincerity and earnestness is possible ; and in proportion as he gains as much as this, he will be able to walk unreservedly with Christ his God and Saviour, and desire His continual presence with him, though he be a sinner, and will wish to be allowed to make Him the one Object of his heart. Perhaps, under somewhat of this feeling, Hagar said, “Thou, God, seest me.” It is under this feeling that holy David may be supposed to say, “Examine me, O Lord, and prove me ; try out my reins and my heart.” “Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart ; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting.”† And especially is it instanced in St. Paul, who seems to delight in the continual laying open of his heart to God, and submitting it to His scrutiny, and waiting for His Presence upon it ; or, in other words, in the joy of a good conscience. For instance, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” “Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not ; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.” “Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom,

* Heb. iv. 13.

† Psalms xvi. 2 ; cxxxix. 23, 24.

but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.”* It is, I say, the characteristic of St. Paul, as manifested to us in his Epistles, to live in the sight of Him who “searcheth the reins and the heart,” to love to place himself before Him, and while contemplating God, to dwell on the thought of God’s contemplating him.

And, it may be, this is something of the Apostle’s meaning, when he speaks of the witness of the Spirit. Perhaps he is speaking of that satisfaction and rest which the soul experiences in proportion as it is able to surrender itself wholly to God, and to have no desire, no aim, but to please Him. When we are awake, we are conscious we are awake, in a sense in which we cannot fancy we are, when we are asleep. When we have discovered the solution of some difficult problem in science, we have a conviction about it which is distinct from that which accompanies fancied discoveries or guesses. When we realize a truth, we have a feeling which they have not, who take words for things. And so, in like manner, if we are allowed to find that real and most sacred Object on which our heart may fix itself, a fulness of peace will follow, which nothing but it can give. In proportion as we have given up the love of the world, and are dead to the creature, and, on the other hand, are born of the Spirit unto love of our Maker and Lord, this love carries with it its own evidence whence it comes. Hence the Apostle says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” Again, he speaks of Him “who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”†

I have been saying that our happiness consists in the contemplation of God;—only such a contemplation is capable of accompanying the mind always and every where, for God alone can be always and every where present;—and that what is commonly said about the happiness of a good conscience confirms this; for what is it to have a good conscience, when we examine the force of our words, but to be ever reminded of God by our own hearts, to have our hearts in such a state as to be led thereby to look up to Him, and to desire His eye to be upon us through the day? It is the feeling attendant, in the case of holy men, on the contemplation of Almighty God.

But, again, this sense of God’s presence is not only the ground of the peace of a good conscience, but of the peace of repentance also. At first sight it might seem strange how repentance can have in it any thing of comfort and peace. The Gospel, indeed, promises to turn all sorrow into joy. It makes us take pleasure in desolateness, weakness, and contempt. “We glory in tribulations also,” says the Apostle, “be-

* Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16. Rom. ix. 1. 2 Cor. i. 12. † Rom. viii. 16. 2 Cor. i. 22.

cause the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It destroys anxiety: "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." It bids us take comfort under bereavement: "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope."* But if there be one sorrow, which might seem to be unmixed misery, if there be one misery left under the Gospel, the awakened sense of having abused the Gospel might have been considered that one. And, again, if there be a time when the presence of the Most High would at first sight seem to be intolerable, it would be then, when the consciousness vividly burst upon us that we had ungratefully rebelled against Him. Yet so it is that true repentance cannot be without the thought of God; it has the thought of God, for it seeks Him; and it seeks Him, because it is quickened with love; and even sorrow must have a sweetness, if love be in it. For what is it to repent but to surrender ourselves to God for pardon or punishment; as loving His presence for its own sake, and accounting chastisement from Him better than rest and peace from the world? While the prodigal son remained among the swine, he had sorrow enough, but no repentance; remorse only; but repentance led him to rise and go to his Father, and to confess his sins. Thus he relieved his heart of its misery, which before was like some hard and fretful tumour weighing upon it. Or, again, consider St. Paul's account of the repentance of the Corinthians; there is sorrow in abundance, nay, anguish, but no gloom, no dryness of spirit, no sternness. The penitents afflict themselves, but it is from the fulness of their hearts, from love, gratitude, devotion, horror of the past, desire to escape from their present selves into some state holier and more heavenly. St. Paul speaks of their "earnest desire, their mourning, their fervent mind towards him." He rejoices, "not that they were made sorry, but that they sorrowed to repentance." "For ye were made sorry," he proceeds, "after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing." And he describes this "sorrowing after a godly sort," to consist in "carefulness, which it wrought in them," "clearing of themselves,"—"indignation,"—"fear,"—"vehement desire,"—"zeal,"—"revenge,"†—feelings, all of them, which open the heart, yet, without relaxing it, as terminating in acts or works.

On the other hand, remorse, or what the Apostle calls "the sorrow of the world," worketh death. Instead of coming to the Fount of Life, to the God of all consolation, remorseful men feed on their own thoughts, without any confidant of their sorrow. They disburden

* Rom. v. 3. 5. Matt. vi. 34. 1 Thess. iv. 13. † 2 Cor. vii. 7. 9. 11.

themselves to no one : to God they will not, to the world they cannot confess. The world will not attend to their confession ; it is a good associate, but it cannot be an intimate. It cannot approach us or stand by us in trouble ; it is no Paraclete ; it leaves all our feelings buried within us, either tumultuous, or, at best, dead : it leaves us gloomy or obdurate. Such is our state, while we live to the world, whether we be in sorrow or in joy. We are pent up within ourselves, and are therefore miserable. Perhaps we may not be able to analyze our misery, or even to realize it, as persons oftentimes who are in bodily sicknesses. We do not know, perhaps, what or where our pain is ; we are so used to it that we do not call it pain. Still so it is ; we need a relief to our hearts, that they may be dark and sullen no longer, or that they may not go on feeding upon themselves ; we need to escape from ourselves to something beyond ; and much as we may wish it otherwise, and may try to make idols to ourselves, nothing short of God's presence is our true refuge ; every thing else is either a mockery, or but an expedient useful for its season or in its measure.

How miserable then is he, who does not practically know this great truth ! year after year he will be a more unhappy man, or, at least, he will emerge into a maturity of misery at once, when he passes out of this world of shadows into that kingdom where all is real. He is at present attempting to satisfy his soul with that which is not bread ; or he thinks the soul can thrive without nourishment. He fancies he can live without an object. He fancies that he is sufficient for himself ; or he supposes that knowledge is sufficient for his happiness ; or that exertion, or that the good opinion of others, or (what is called) fame, or that the comforts and luxuries of wealth, are sufficient for him. What a truly wretched state is that coldness and dryness of soul, in which so many live and die, high and low, learned and unlearned. Many a great man, many a peasant, many a busy man, lives and dies with closed heart, with affections undeveloped, unexercised. You see the poor man, passing day after day, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, without a thought in his mind, to appearance almost like a stone. You see the educated man, full of thought, full of intelligence, full of action, but still with a stone heart, as cold and dead as regards his affections, as if he were the poor ignorant countryman. You see others, with warm affections, perhaps, for their families, with benevolent feelings towards their fellow-men, yet stopping there ; centering their hearts on what is sure to fail them, as being perishable. Life passes, riches fly away, popularity is fickle, the senses decay, the world changes, friends die. One alone is constant : One alone is true to us ; One alone can be true ; One alone can be all things to us ; One alone can

supply our needs ; One alone can train us up to our full perfection ; One alone can give a meaning to our complex and intricate nature ; One alone can give us tune and harmony ; One alone can form and possess us. Are we allowed to put ourselves under His guidance ? this surely is the only question. Has He really made us His children, and taken possession of us by His Holy Spirit ? Are we still in His kingdom of grace, in spite of our sins ? The question is not whither we should go, but whether He will receive. And we trust, that, in spite of our sins, He will receive us still, every one of us, if we seek His face in love unfeigned, and holy fear. Let us then do our part, as He has done His, and much more. Let us say with the Psalmist, " Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."*

SERMON XXIII.

LOVE, THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

1 CORINTHIANS xiii. 1.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

I SUPPOSE the greater number of persons who try to live Christian lives, and who observe themselves with any care, are dissatisfied with their own state on this point, that, whatever their religious attainments may be, yet they feel that their motive is not the highest ;—that the love of God, and of man for his sake, is not their ruling principle. They may do much, nay, if it so happen, they may suffer much ; but they have little reason to think that they love much, that they do and suffer for love's sake. I do not mean that they thus express themselves exactly, but that they are dissatisfied with themselves, and that when this dissatisfaction is examined into, it will be found ultimately to come to this,

* Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

though they will give different accounts of it. They may call themselves cold, or hard-hearted, or fickle, or double minded, or doubting, or dim-sighted, or weak in resolve, but they mean pretty much the same thing, that their affections do not rest on Almighty God as their great Object. And this will be found to be the complaint of religious men among ourselves, not less than others; their reason and their heart not going together; their reason tending heavenwards, and their heart earthwards.

I will now make some remarks on the defect I have described, as thinking that the careful consideration of it may serve as one step towards its removal.

Love, and love only, is the fulfilling of the Law, and they only are in God's favour in whom the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled. This, we know full well; yet, alas! at the same time, we cannot deny that whatever good thing we have to show, whether activity, or patience, or faith, or fruitfulness in good works, love to God and man is not ours, or, at least, in very scanty measure; not at all proportionately to our apparent attainments. Now, to enlarge upon this.

In the first place, love clearly does not consist merely in great sacrifices. We can take no comfort to ourselves that we are God's own, merely on the ground of great deeds or great sufferings. The greatest sacrifices without love would be nothing worth, and that they are great does not necessarily prove they are done with love. St. Paul emphatically assures us that his acceptance with God did not stand in any of those high endowments, which strike us in him at first sight, and which, did we actually see him, doubtless would so much draw us to him. One of his highest gifts, for instance, was his spiritual knowledge. He shared and felt the sinfulness and infirmities of human nature; he had a deep insight into the glories of God's grace, such as no natural man can have. He had an awful sense of the realities of heaven, and the mysteries revealed. He could have answered ten thousand questions on theological subjects, on all those points about which the Church has disputed since his time, and which we now long to ask him. He was a man whom one could not come near, without going away from him wiser than one came; a fount of knowledge and wisdom ever full, ever approachable, ever flowing, from which all who came in faith, gained a measure of the gifts which God had lodged in him. His presence inspired resolution, confidence, and zeal, as one who was the keeper of secrets, and the revealer of the whole counsel of God; and who, by look, and word, and deed, as it were, encompassed his brethren with God's mercies and judgments, spread abroad and reared aloft the divine system of doctrine and precept, and seated himself and them securely in the midst of it. Such was this great servant of Christ and Teacher of the

Gentiles ; yet he says, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal ; I am nothing." Spiritual discernment, an insight into the Gospel covenant, is no evidence of love.

Another distinguishing mark of his character, as viewed in Scripture, is his faith, a prompt, decisive, simple, assent to God's word, a deadness to motives of earth, a firm hold of the truths of the unseen world, and keenness in following them out ; yet he says of his faith also, "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Faith is no necessary evidence of love.

A tender consideration of the temporal wants of his brethren is another striking feature of his character, as it is a special characteristic of every true Christian ; yet he says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Self-denying almsgiving is no necessary evidence of love.

Once more. He, if any man, had the spirit of a martyr ; yet he implies that even martyrdom, viewed in itself, is no passport into the heavenly kingdom. "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Martyrdom is no necessary evidence of love.

I do not say that at this day we have many specimens or much opportunity of such high deeds and attainments ; but in our degree we certainly may follow St. Paul in them,—in spiritual discernment, in faith, in works of mercy, and in confessorship. We may, we ought to follow him. Yet though we do, still, it may be, we are not possessed of the one thing needful, of the spirit of love, or in a very poor measure ; and this is what serious men feel in their own case.

Let us leave these sublimer matters, and proceed to the humbler and continual duties of daily life ; and let us see whether these too may not be performed with considerable exactness, yet with deficient love. Surely they may ; and serious men complain of themselves here, even more than when exercised on greater subjects. Our Lord says, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments ;" but they feel that though they are, to a certain point, keeping God's commandments, yet love is not proportionate, does not keep pace with, their obedience ; that obedience springs from some source short of love. This they perceive ; they feel themselves to be hollow ; a fair outside, without a spirit within it.

I mean as follows :—It is possible to obey, not from love towards God and man, but from a sort of conscientiousness short of love ; from some notion of acting up to a *law* ; that is, more from the fear of God

than from love of Him. Surely this is what, in one shape or other, we see daily on all sides of us ; the case of men living to the world, yet not without a certain sense of religion, which acts as a restraint on them. They pursue ends of this world, but not to the full ; they are checked, and go a certain way only, because they dare not go further. This external restraint acts with various degrees of strength on various persons. They all live to this world, and act from the love of it ; they all allow their love of the world a certain range ; but, at some particular point, which is often quite arbitrary, this man stops, and that man stops. Each stops at a different point in the course of the world, and thinks every one else profane who goes further, and superstitious who does not go so far,—laughs at the latter, is shocked at the former. And hence those few who are miserable enough to have rid themselves of all scruples, look with great contempt on such of their companions as have any, be those scruples more or less, as being inconsistent and absurd. They scoff at the principle of mere fear, as a capricious and fanciful principle ; proceeding on no rule, and having no evidence of its authority, no claim on our respect ; as a weakness in our nature, rather than an essential portion of that nature, viewed in its perfection and entireness. And this being all the notion which their experience gives them of religion, as not knowing really religious men, they think of religion, only as a principle which interferes with our enjoyments unintelligibly and irrationally. Man is made to love. So far is plain. They see that clearly and truly ; but religion, as far as they conceive of it, is a system destitute of objects of love ; a system of fear. It repels and forbids, and thus seems to destroy the proper function of man, or, in other words, to be unnatural. And it is true that this sort of fear of God, or rather slavish dread, as it may more truly be called, *is* unnatural ; but then it is not religion, which really consists, not in the mere fear of God, but in His love ; or if it be religion, it is but the religion of devils, who believe and tremble ; or of idolaters, whom devils have seduced, and whose worship is superstition,—the attempt to appease beings whom they love not ; and, in a word, of the children of this world, who would, if possible, serve God and Mammon, and, whereas religion consists of love *and* fear, give to God their fear, and to Mammon their love.

And what takes place so generally in the world at large, this, I say, serious men will feel as happening, in its degree, in their own case. They will understand that even strict obedience is no evidence of fervent love, and they will lament to perceive that they obey God far more than they love Him. They will recollect the instance of Balaam, who was even exemplary in his obedience, yet had not love ; and the thought will come over them as a perplexity, what proof they have

that they are not, after all, deceiving themselves, and thinking themselves religious when they are not. They will indeed be conscious to themselves of the sacrifice they make of their own wishes and pursuits to the will of God; but they are conscious also that they sacrifice them because they know they *ought* to do so, not simply from love of God. And they ask, almost in a kind of despair, How are we to learn, not merely to obey, but to love?

They say, How are we to fulfil St. Paul's words, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me?" And this would seem an especial difficulty in the case of those who live among men, whose duties lie amid the engagements of this world's business, whose thoughts, affections, exertions, are directed towards things which they see, things present and temporal. In their case it seems to be a great thing, even if their *rule* of life is a heavenly one, if they *act* according to God's will; but how can they hope that heavenly objects should fill their heart, when there is no room left for them? how shall things absent displace things present, things unseen, the things that are visible? Thus they seem to be reduced, as if by a sort of necessity, to that state, which I just now described as the state of men of the world, that of having their hearts set on the world, and being only restrained outwardly by religious rules.

To proceed. Generally speaking, men will be able to bring against themselves positive charges of want of love, more unsatisfactory still. I suppose most men, or at least a great number of men, have to lament over their hardness of heart, which, when analyzed, will be found to be nothing else but the absence of love. I mean that hardness which, for instance, makes us unable to repent as we wish. No repentance is truly such without love; it is love which gives it its efficacy in God's sight. Without love there may be remorse, regret, self-reproach, self-condemnation, but there is not saving penitence. There may be conviction of the reason, but not conversion of the heart. Now, I say, a great many men lament in themselves this want of love in repenting; they are hard-hearted; they are deeply conscious of their sins; they abhor them; and yet they can take as lively interest in what goes on around them, as if they had no such consciousness; or they mourn this minute, and the next are quite impenetrable. Or, though, as they think and believe, they fear God's anger, and are full of confusion at themselves, yet they find (to their surprise, I may say,) that they cannot abstain from any indulgence ever so trivial, which would be (as their reason tells them) a natural way of showing sorrow. They eat and drink with as good a heart, as if they had no distress

upon their minds; they find no difficulty in entering into any of the recreations or secular employments which come in their way. They sleep as soundly: and, in spite of their grief, perhaps find it most difficult to persuade themselves to rise early to pray for pardon. These are signs of want of love.

Or, again, without reference to the case of penitence, they have a general indisposition towards prayer and other exercises of devotion. They find it most difficult to get themselves to pray; most difficult too to rouse their minds to attend to their prayers. At very best they do but feel satisfaction in devotion *while* they are engaged in it. Then perhaps they find a real pleasure in it, and wonder they can ever find it irksome; yet if any chance throws them out of their habitual exercises, they find it most difficult to return to them. They do not like them well enough to seek them *from* liking them. They are kept in them by habit, by regularity in observing them; not by love. When the regular course is broken, there is no inward principle to act at once in repairing the mischief. In wounds of the body, nature works towards a recovery, and left to itself, would recover; but we have no spiritual principle strong and healthy enough to set religious matters right in us when they have got disordered, and to supply for us the absence of rule and custom. Here, again, is obedience, more or less mechanical, or without love.

Again:—a like absence of love is shown in our proneness to be taken up and engrossed with trifles. Why is it that we are so open to the power of excitement? why is it that we are looking out for novelties? why is it that we complain of want of variety in a religious life? why that we cannot bear to go on in an ordinary round of duties year after year? why is it that lowly duties, such as condescending to men of low estate, are distasteful and irksome? why is it that we need powerful preaching, or interesting and touching books, in order to keep our thoughts and feelings on God? why is it that our faith is so dissipated and weakened by hearing casual objections urged against the doctrine of Christ? why is it that we are so impatient that objections should be answered? why are we so afraid of worldly events, or the opinions of men? why do we so dread their censure or ridicule?—Clearly because we are deficient in love. He who loves, cares little for any thing else. The world may go as it will; he sees and hears it not, for his thoughts are drawn another way; he is solicitous mainly to walk with God, and to be found with God; and is in perfect peace because he is stayed in Him.

And here we have an additional proof how weak our love is; viz. when we consider how little adequate our professed principles are found

to be, to support us in affliction. I suppose it often happens to men to feel this, when some reverse or unexpected distress comes upon them. They indeed most especially will feel it, of course, who have let their words, nay, their thoughts, much outrun their hearts; but numbers will feel it too, who have tried to make their reason and affections keep pace with each other. We are told of the righteous man, that "he will not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast, and believeth in the Lord. His heart is established, and will not shrink."* Such must be the case of every one who realizes his own words, when he talks of the shortness of life, the wearisomeness of the world, and the security of heaven. Yet how cold and dreary do all such topics prove, when a man comes into trouble? and why, except that he has been after all set upon things visible, not on God, while he has been speaking of things invisible? There has been much profession and little love.

These are some of the proofs which are continually brought home to us, if we attend to ourselves, of our want of love to God; and they will readily suggest others to us. If I must, before concluding, remark upon the mode of overcoming the evil, I must say plainly this, that, fanciful though it may appear at first sight to say so, the comforts of life are the main cause of it; and, much as we may lament and struggle against it, till we learn to dispense with them in good measure, we shall not overcome it. Till we, in a certain sense, detach ourselves from our bodies, our minds will not be in a state to receive divine impressions, and to exert heavenly aspirations. A smooth and easy life, an uninterrupted enjoyment of the goods of Providence, full meals, soft raiment, well-furnished homes, the pleasures of sense, the feeling of security, the consciousness of wealth,—these, and the like, if we are not careful, choke up all the avenues of the soul, through which the light and breath of heaven might come to us. A hard life is, alas! no certain method of becoming spiritually minded, but it is one out of the means by which Almighty God makes us so. We must, at least at seasons, defraud ourselves of nature, if we would not be defrauded of grace. If we attempt to force our minds into a loving and devotional temper, without this preparation, it is too plain what will follow,—the grossness and coarseness, the affectation, the effeminacy, the unreality, the presumption, the hollowness, (suffer me, my brethren, while I say plainly, but seriously, what I mean,) in a word, what Scripture calls the Hypocrisy, which we see around us; that state of mind in which the reason, seeing what we should be, and the conscience enjoining it,

* Ps. cxii. 7, 8.

and the heart being unequal to it, some or other pretence is set up, by way of compromise, that men may say, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace."

And next, after enjoining this habitual preparation of heart, let me bid you cherish, what otherwise it were shocking to attempt, a constant sense of the love of your Lord and Saviour in dying on the Cross for you. "The love of Christ," says the Apostle, "constraineth us;" not that gratitude leads to love, where there is no sympathy, (for, as all know, we often reproach ourselves with not loving persons who yet have loved us,) but where hearts are in their degree renewed after Christ's image, there, under His grace, gratitude to Him will increase our love of Him, and we shall rejoice in that goodness which has been so good to us. Here, again, self-discipline will be necessary. It makes the heart tender as well as reverent. Christ showed His love in deed, not in word, and you will be touched by the thought of His Cross far more by bearing it after Him, than by glowing accounts of it. All the modes by which you bring it before you must be simple and severe; "excellency of speech," or "enticing words," to use St. Paul's language, is the worst way of any. Think of the Cross when you rise and when you lie down, when you go out and when you come in, when you eat, and when you walk, and when you converse, when you buy and when you sell, when you labour and when you rest, consecrating and sealing all your doings with this one mental action, the thought of the Crucified. Do not talk of it to others; be silent, like the penitent woman, who showed her love in deep subdued acts. She "stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." And Christ said of her, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."*

And, further, let us dwell often upon those His manifold mercies to us and to our brethren, which are the consequence of His coming upon earth; His adorable counsels, as manifested in our personal election,—how it is that we are called and others not; the wonders of His grace towards us from our infancy until now; the gifts He has given us; the aid He has vouchsafed; the answers He has accorded to our prayers. And, further, let us, as far as we have the opportunity, meditate upon His dealings with His Church from age to age; on His faithfulness to His promises, and the mysterious mode of their fulfilment; how He has ever led His people forward safely and prosperously on the whole amid

* Luke vii. 38. 47.

so many enemies ; what unexpected events have worked His purposes ; how evil has been changed into good ; how His sacred Truth has ever been preserved unimpaired ; how Saints have been brought on to their perfection in the darkest times. And, further, let us muse over the deep gifts and powers lodged in the Church : what thoughts do His ordinances raise in the believing mind !—what wonder, what awe, what transport, when duly dwelt upon !

It is by such deeds and such thoughts that our services, our repentings, our prayers, our intercourse with men, will become instinct with the spirit of love. Then we do every thing thankfully and joyfully, when we are temples of Christ, with His Image set up in us. Then it is that we mix with the world without loving it, for our affections are given to another. We can bear to look on the world's beauty, for we have no heart for it. We are not disturbed at its frowns, for we live not in its smiles. We rejoice in the House of Prayer, because He is there "whom our soul loveth." We can condescend to the poor and lowly, for they are the presence of Him who is Invisible. We are patient in bereavement, adversity, or pain, for they are Christ's tokens.

Thus let us enter the Forty Days of Lent now approaching.* For Forty Days we seek after love by means of fasting. May we find it more and more, the older we grow, till death comes and gives us the sight of Him who is at once its Object and its Author.

SERMON XXIV.

THE POWER OF THE WILL.

EPHESIANS vi. 10.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

WE know that there are great multitudes of professed Christians, who, alas ! have actually turned from God with a deliberate will and purpose, and, in consequence, are at present strangers to the grace of God ; though they do not know, or do not care about this. But a vast num-

* Preached on Quinquagesima.

ber of Christians, half of the whole number at least, are in other circumstances. They have not thrown themselves out of a state of grace, nor have they to repent and turn to God, in the sense in which they must, who have allowed themselves in wilful transgression, after the knowledge of the truth has been imparted to them. Numbers there are in all ranks of life, who, having good parents and advisers, or safe homes, or religious pursuits, or being without strong feelings and passions, or, for whatever reason, cannot be supposed to have put off from them the garment of divine grace, and deserted to the ranks of the enemy. Yet are they not safe, nevertheless. It is plain,—for surely it is not enough to avoid evil in order to attain to heaven,—we must follow after good. What, then, is their danger?—That of the unprofitable servant who hid his lord's money. As far removed as that slothful servant was from those who traded with their talents, in his state and in his destiny, so far separate from one another are two classes of Christians who live together here as brethren,—one are using grace, the other neglecting it; one are making progress, the other sitting still; one are working for a reward, the other are idle and worthless.

This view of things should ever be borne in mind when we speak of the state of grace. There are different degrees in which we may stand in God's favour; we may be rising or sinking in His favour; we may not have forfeited it, yet we may not be securing it; we may be safe for the present, but have a dangerous prospect before us. We may be more or less "hypocrites," "slothful," "unprofitable," and yet our day of grace not be passed. We may still have the remains of our new nature lingering on us, the influences of grace present with us, and the power of amendment and conversion within us. We may still have talents which we may put to account, and gifts which we may stir up. We may not be cast out of our state of justification, and yet may be destitute of that love of God, love of God's truth, love of holiness, love of active and generous obedience, that honest surrender of self, which alone will secure to us hereafter the blessed words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."*

The only qualification which will avail us for heaven is the love of God. We may keep from gross sinning, and yet not have this divine gift, "without which we are dead" in God's sight. This changes our whole being; this makes us live; this makes us grow in grace and abound in good works; this makes us fit for God's presence hereafter.

Now, here I have said a number of things, each of which will bear drawing out by itself, and insisting on.

* Matt xxv. 21.

No one can doubt that we are again and again exhorted in Scripture to be holy and perfect, to be holy and blameless in the sight of God, to be holy as He is holy, to keep the commandments, to fulfil the Law, to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. Why do we not obey as we ought? Many people will answer that we have a fallen nature, which hinders us; that we cannot help it, though we ought to be very sorry for it; that this is the reason of our short-comings. Not so: we can help it; we are not hindered; what we want is the will; and it is our own fault that we have it not. We have all things granted to us; God has abounded in His mercies to us; we have a depth of power and strength lodged in us; but we have not the heart, we have not the will, we have not the love to use it. We lack this one thing, a desire to be new made; and I think any one who examines himself carefully, will own that he does, and that this is the reason why he cannot and does not obey or make progress in holiness.

That we have this great gift within us, or are in a state of grace, for the two statements mean nearly the same thing, is very plain of course from Scripture. We all know what Scripture says on the subject, and yet even here it may be as well to dwell on one or two passages by way of reminding and impressing ourselves.

Consider then our Saviour's words: "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a *well of water* springing up into everlasting life."* Exhaust the sea, it will not fill the infinite spaces of the heavens, but the gift within us may be drawn out till it fills eternity.

Again, consider St. Paul's most wonderful words in the Epistle from which the text is taken, when he gives glory to "Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."† You observe here, that there is a power given to us Christians, which "worketh in us," a special hidden mysterious power, which makes us its instruments. Even that we have souls, is strange and mysterious. We do not see our souls; but we see in others and we are conscious in ourselves of a principle which rules our bodies, and makes them what the brutes are not. We have that in us which informs our bodies, and changes them from mere animal bodies into human. Brutes cannot talk; brutes have little expression of countenance; they cannot form into societies; they cannot progress. Why? Because they have not that hidden gift which we have,—reason. Well, in like manner St. Paul speaks of Christians too as having a special power within them, which they gain because they are, and when they become Christians; and he calls it, in the text to which I

* John iv. 14.

† Ephes. iii. 20.

am referring, "the power that worketh in us." In a former chapter of the Epistle, he speaks of "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,"* and he says that our eyes must be enlightened in order to recognise it; and he compares it to that divine power in Christ our Saviour, by which, working in due season, He was raised from the dead, so that the bonds of death had no dominion over Him. As seeds have life in them, which seem lifeless, so the Body of Christ had life in itself, when it was dead; and so also, though not in a similar way, we, too, sinners as we are, have a spiritual principle in us, if we did but exert it, so great, so wondrous, that all the powers in the visible world, all the conceivable forces and appetites of matter, all the physical miracles which are at this day in process of discovery, almost superseding time and space, dispensing with numbers, and rivalling mind, all these powers of nature are nothing to this gift within us. Why do I say this? because the Apostle tells us that God is able thereby "to do *exceeding abundantly above all* that we ask or think." You see he labours for words to express the exuberant, overflowing fulness, the vast and unfathomable depth, or what he has just called "the breadth and length, and depth, and height" of the gift given us. And hence he elsewhere says, "I can do *all things* through Christ, which *strengtheneth* me;"† where he uses the same word, which occurs also in the text,—"*My brethren, be strong* in the Lord, and in the power of His might." See what an accumulation of words. First, be *strong*, or be ye made strong. Strong in what? strong in power. In the power of what? in the power of His might, the might of God. Three words are used one on another, to express the manifold gift which God has given us. He to might has added power, and power He has made grow into strength. We have the power of His might; nor only so, but the strength of the power of His might who is Almighty.

And this is the very account which St. Luke gives us of St. Paul's own state in the Acts, after his conversion. The Jews wondered, but "Saul increased the more in *strength*, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus."‡ He became more and more strong. And, at the end of his course, when brought before the Romans, "The Lord," as he says "stood with him, and *strengthened* him;" and in turn he too exhorts Timothy, "Thou, therefore, my son, be *strong* in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who

* Ephes. i. 19.

† Phil. iv. 13.

‡ Acts ix. 22.

shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”*

I said just now that we did not need Scripture to tell us of our divinely imparted power ; that our own consciousness was sufficient. I do not mean to say that our consciousness will enable us to rise to the fulness of the Apostle’s expressions ; for trial, of course, cannot ascertain an inexhaustible gift. All we can know of it by experience is, that it goes beyond *us*, that *we* have never fathomed it, that we have drawn from it, and never emptied it ; that we have evidence that there is *a* power with us, how great we know not, which does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, and is always equal to all our needs. And of as much as this, I think, we have abundant evidence.

Let us ask ourselves, why is it that we so often wish to do right and cannot ? why is it that we are so frail, feeble, languid, wayward, dim-sighted, fluctuating, perverse ? why is it that we cannot “do the things that we would ?” why is it that, day after day, we remain irresolute, that we serve God so poorly, that we govern ourselves so weakly and so variably, that we cannot command our thoughts, that we are so slothful, so cowardly, so discontented, so sensual, so ignorant ? Why is it that we, who trust that we are not by wilful sin thrown out of grace (for of such I am all along speaking), why is it that we, who are ruled by no evil masters, and bent upon no earthly ends, who are not covetous, or profligate livers, or worldly-minded, or ambitious, or envious, or proud, or unforgiving, or desirous of name,—why is it that we, in the very kingdom of grace, surrounded by Angels, and preceded by Saints, nevertheless can do so little, and instead of mounting with wings like eagles, grovel in the dust, and do but sin, and confess sin, alternately ? Is it that the *power* of God is not within us ? Is it literally that we are *not able* to perform God’s commandments ? God forbid ! We are able. We have that given us which makes us able. We are not in a state of nature. We have had the gift of grace implanted in us. We have a power within us to do what we are commanded to do. What is it we lack ? The power ! No ; the will. What we lack is the real, simple, earnest, sincere inclination and aim to use what God has given us, and what we have in us. I say, our experience tells us this. It is no matter of mere doctrine, much less a matter of words, but of things ; a very practical plain matter.

To take an instance of the simple kind. Is not the power to use our limbs our own, nay, even by nature ? What then is sloth but a want of will ? When we are not set on an object so greatly as to overcome

* 2 Tim. ii. 1—3 ; iv. 17.

the inconvenience of an effort, we remain as we are ;—when we ought to exert ourselves, we are slothful. But is the effort any effort at all, when we desire that which needs the effort ?

In like manner, to take a greater thing. Are not the feelings as distinct as well can be, between remorse and repentance ? In both a man is very sorry and ashamed of what he has done ; in both he has a painful foreboding that he may perchance sin again in spite of his present grief. You will hear a man perhaps lament that he is so weak, so that he quite dreads what is to come another time, after all his good resolutions. There are cases, doubtless, in which a man *is* thus weak in power, though earnest in will ; and, of course, it continually happens that he has ungovernable feelings and passions in spite of his better nature. But in a very great multitude of cases this pretence of want of power is really but a want of will. When a man complains that he is under the dominion of any bad habit, let him seriously ask himself whether he has ever *willed* to get rid of it. Can he, with a simple mind, say in God's sight, "I wish it removed?"

A man, for instance, cannot attend to his prayers ; his mind wanders ; other thoughts intrude ; time after time passes, and it is the same. Shall we say, this arises from want of power ? Of course it may be so ; but before he says so, let him consider whether he has ever roused himself, shaken himself, awakened himself, got himself to will, if I may so say, attention. We know the feeling in unpleasant dreams, when we say to ourselves, "This is a dream," and yet cannot exert ourselves to will to be free from it ; and how at length by an effort we will to move, and the spell at once is broken ; we wake. So it is with sloth and indolence ; the evil one lies heavy on us, but he has no power over us except in our unwillingness to get rid of him. He cannot battle with us ; he flies ; he can do no more, as soon as we propose to fight with him.

There is a famous instance of a holy man of old time, who, before his conversion, felt indeed the excellence of purity, but could not get himself to say more in prayer than "Give me chastity, but not yet." I will not be inconsiderate enough to make light of the power of temptation of any kind, nor will I presume to say that Almighty God will certainly shield a man from temptation for his wishing it ; but whenever men complain, as they often do, of the arduousness of a high virtue, at least it were well that they should first ask themselves the question, whether they desire to have it. We hear much in this day of the impossibility of heavenly purity ;—far be it from me to say that every one has not his proper gift from God, one after this manner, another after that ;—but, O ye men of the world, when ye talk, as ye

do, so much of the impossibility of this or that supernatural grace, when you disbelieve in the existence of severe self-rule, when you scoff at holy resolutions, and affix a slur on those who make them, are you sure that the impossibility which you insist upon does not lie, not in nature, but in the will? Let us but will, and our nature is changed, "according to the power that worketh in us." Say not, in excuse for others or for yourselves, that you cannot be other than Adam made you; you have never brought yourselves to will it,—you cannot bear to will it. You cannot bear to be other than you are. Life would seem a blank to you, were you other; yet what you are from not desiring a gift, this you make an excuse for not possessing it.

Let us take what trial we please,—the world's ridicule or censure, loss of prospects, loss of admirers or friends, loss of ease, endurance of bodily pain,—and recollect how easy our course has been, directly we had once made up our mind to submit to it; how simple all that remained became, how wonderfully difficulties were removed from without, and how the soul was strengthened inwardly to do what was to be done. But it is seldom we have heart to throw ourselves, if I may so speak, on the Divine Arm; we dare not trust ourselves on the waters, though Christ bids us. We have not St. Peter's love to ask leave to come to Him upon the sea. When we once are filled with that heavenly charity, we can do all things, because we attempt all things,—for to attempt is to do.

I would have every one carefully consider whether he has ever found God fail him in trial, when his own heart had not failed him; and whether he has not found strength greater and greater given him according to his day; whether he has not gained clear proof on trial that he *has* a divine power lodged within him, and a certain conviction withal that he has not made the extreme trial of it, or reached its limits. Grace ever outstrips prayer. Abraham ceased interceding ere God stayed his granting. Joash smote upon the ground but thrice, when he might have gained five victories or six. All have the gift, many do not use it at all, none expend it. One wraps it in a napkin, another gains five pounds, another ten. It will bear thirty fold, or sixty, or a hundred. We know not what we are, or might be. As the seed has a tree within it, so men have within them Angels.

Hence the great stress laid in Scripture on growing in grace. Seeds are intended to grow into trees. We are regenerated in order that we may be renewed daily after the Image of Him who has regenerated us. In the text and verses following, we have our calling set forth, to "stir up our pure minds, by way of remembrance,"* to the pursuit of it.

* 2 Pet. iii. 1.

“Be strong in the Lord,” says the Apostle, “and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God,” with your loins girt about with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit. One grace and then another is to be perfected in us. Each day is to bring forth its own treasure, till we stand, like blessed spirits, able and waiting to do the will of God.

Still more apposite are St. Peter’s words, which go through the whole doctrine which I have been insisting on, point by point. First, he tells us that ‘divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness;’* that is, we have the *gift*. Then he speaks of the *object* which the gift is to effect,—“exceeding great and precious promises are given unto us, that by these we may be *partakers of the divine nature* ;” that is, who, by birth, are children of wrath, should become inwardly and really sons of God ; putting off our former selves or, as he says, “having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust ;” that is, cleansing ourselves from all that remains in us of original sin, the infection of concupiscence. With which closely agree St. Paul’s words to the Corinthians, “Having these promises,” he says, “dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”† But to continue with St. Peter,—“Giving all diligence,” he says, “add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.” Next he speaks of those who, though they cannot be said to have forfeited God’s grace, yet by a sluggish will and a lukewarm love, have become but unprofitable, and “cumber the ground” in the Lord’s vineyard. “He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins,”—has forgotten that cleansing which he once received, when he was brought into the kingdom of grace. “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure ; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall : for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the very everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Day by day shall ye enter deeper and deeper into the fullness of the riches of that kingdom of which ye are made members.

Or, lastly, consider St. Paul’s account of the same growth, and of the course of it, in his Epistle to the Romans. “Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh

* 2 Pet. i. 3.

† 2 Cor. vii. 1.

not ashamed." Such is the series of gifts, patience, experience, hope, a soul without shame,—and whence all this? He continues, "because the *love* of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."*

Love can do all things; "charity never faileth;" he that has the will has the power. You will say, "But is not the will itself from God? and, therefore, is it not after all *His* doing, not ours, if we have *not* the will?" Doubtless, by nature, our will is in bondage; we cannot will good; but by the grace of God our will has been set free; we obtain again, to a certain extent, the gift of free-will;—henceforth, we can will, or not will. If we will, it is doubtless from God's grace, who gave us the power to will, and to Him be the praise; but it is from ourselves too, because we have used that power which God gave. God enables us to will and to do; by nature we cannot will, but by grace we can; and now if we do not will, we are the cause of the defect. What can Almighty Mercy do for us which He hath not done? "He has given *all* things which pertain to life and godliness;" and we, in consequence, can "make our calling and election sure," as the holy men of God did of old time. Ah, how do those ancient Saints put us to shame! how were they "out of weakness made strong," how "waxed" they "valiant in fight," and became as Angels upon earth instead of men! And why?—because they had a heart to contemplate, to design, to *will* great things.

Doubtless, in many respects, we are all but men to the end; we hunger, we thirst, we need sustenance, we need sleep, we need society, we need instruction, we need encouragement, we need example; yet who can say the heights to which in time men can proceed in all things, who beginning by little and little, yet in the distance shadow forth great things? "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left. . . . Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither shalt thou be confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame. . . . In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. . . . This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord."* High words like these relate in the first place to the Church, but doubtless they are also fulfilled in their measure in each of her true children. But we sit coldly and sluggishly at home; we fold our hands and cry, "a little

* Rom. v. 3—5.

† Isa. liv. 2, 3, 4. 14. 17.

more slumber ;" we shut our eyes, we cannot see things afar off, we cannot "see the land which is very far off;" we do not understand that Christ calls us after Him ; we do not hear the voice of His heralds in the wilderness ; we have not the heart to go forth to Him who multiplies the loaves, and feeds us by every word of His mouth. Other children of Adam have before now done in His strength what we put aside. We fear to be too holy. Others put us to shame ; all around us, others are doing what we will not. Others are entering deeper into the kingdom of heaven than we. Others are fighting against their enemies more truly and bravely. The unlettered, the ungifted, the young, the weak and simple, with sling and stones from the brook, are encountering Goliath, as having on divine armour. The Church is rising up around us day by day towards heaven, and we do nothing but object, or explain away, or criticise, or make excuses, or wonder. We fear to cast in our lot with the Saints, lest we become a party ; we fear to seek the strait gate, lest we be of the few, not the many. O may we be loyal and affectionate before our race is run ! Before our sun goes down in the grave, O may we learn somewhat more of what the Apostle calls the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, and catch some of the rays of love which come from Him ! Especially at the season of the year now approaching,* when Christ calls us into the wilderness, let us gird up our loins and fearlessly obey the summons. Let us take up our cross and follow Him. Let us take to us, "the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places ; wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."

* Preached on Quinquagesima.

1897

CANADA LIFE

ASSURANCE CO.

Thursday

11

NOVEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
7	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	8	9	10	11	12	13
21	15	16	17	18	19	20
28	22	23	24	25	26	27
29	30					

The best life insurance policy to be had of the Semi-Centennial Policies of the Canada

ALFRED STONE

AGENT,

Box 499,

GUELPH.

PAROCHIAL SERMONS,

FOR THE

SPRING QUARTER,

BEING

THE WEEKS BETWEEN THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT
AND TRINITY SUNDAY.

VOL. VI.

OF THE LONDON EDITION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Spring Quarter may fitly be called the Sacramental, from the series of Feasts and Seasons which it comprises, and the character of the doctrines which it commemorates. The subjects then which it introduces to our meditation are naturally of a theological cast ; but as it has been the wish of the Author, in his foregoing volumes, to make his Sermons, for the most part, bear upon conduct, so here also, as far as was consistent with reverence towards the sacred events under review, he has selected such as either are altogether ethical and practical, or aim at suggesting advice, or removing perplexity, in matters of duty. Though Trinity Sunday does not, strictly speaking, fall within the Quarter, he has thought he might be allowed to include it in this course.

Oriel College,
Quinquagesima, 1842.

SERMON I.

FASTING A SOURCE OF TRIAL.

MATTHEW iv. 2.

And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered.

THE season of humiliation, which precedes Easter, lasts for forty days, in memory of our Lord's long fast in the wilderness. Accordingly on this day, the first Sunday in Lent, we read the Gospel which gives an account of it; and in the Collect we pray Him, who for our sakes fasted forty days and forty nights, to bless our abstinence to the good of our souls and bodies.

We fast by way of penitence and in order to subdue the flesh. Our Saviour had no need of fasting for either purpose. His fasting was unlike ours, as in its intensity, so in its object. And yet when we begin to fast, His pattern is set before us; and we continue the time of fasting till, in number of days, we have equalled His.

There is a reason for this;—in truth, we must do nothing except with Him in our eye. As He it is, through whom alone we have the power to do any good thing, so unless we do it for Him it is not good. From Him our obedience comes, towards Him it must look. He says, "Without Me ye can do nothing."* No work is good without grace and without love.

St. Paul gave up all things "to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but the righteousness which is from God upon faith."† Then only are our righteousnesses acceptable when they are done, not in a legal way, but in Christ through faith. Vain were all the deeds of the Law, because they were not attended

* John xv. 5.

† Phil. iii. 10.

V by the power of the Spirit. They were the mere attempts of unaided nature to fulfil what it ought indeed, but was not able to fulfil. None but the blind and carnal, or those who were in utter ignorance, could find aught in them to rejoice in. What were all the righteousnesses of the Law, what its deeds, even when more than ordinary, its alms and fastings, its disfiguring of faces and afflicting of souls ; what was all this but dust and dross, a pitiful earthly service, a miserable hopeless penance, so far as the grace and the presence of Christ were absent ? The Jews might humble themselves, but they did not rise in the spirit, while they fell down in the flesh ; they might afflict themselves, but it did not turn to their salvation ; they might sorrow, but not as always rejoicing ; the outward man might perish, but the inward man was not renewed day by day. They had the burden and heat of the day and the yoke of the Law, but it did not “work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” But God hath reserved some better thing for us. This is what it is to be one of Christ’s little ones,—to be able to do what the Jews thought they could do, and could not ; to have that within us through which we can do all things ; to be possessed by His presence as our life, our strength, our merit, our hope, our crown ; to become in a wonderful way His members, the instruments, or visible form, or sacramental sign, of the One Invisible Ever-Present Son of God, mystically reiterating in each of us all the acts of His earthly life, His birth, consecration, fasting, temptation, conflicts, victories, sufferings, agony, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension ; —He being all in all,—we, with as little power in ourselves, as little excellence or merit, as the water in Baptism, or the bread and the wine in Holy Communion ; yet strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. These are the thoughts with which we celebrated Christmas and Epiphany, these are the thoughts which must accompany us through Lent.

Yes, even in our penitential exercises, when we could least have hoped to find a pattern in Him, Christ has gone before us to sanctify them to us. He has blessed fasting as a means of grace, in that He has fasted ; and fasting is only acceptable when it is done for His sake. Penitence is mere formality, or mere remorse, unless done in love. If we fast, without uniting ourselves in heart to Christ, imitating Him, and praying that He would make our fasting His own, would associate it with His own, and communicate it to the virtue of His own, so that we may be in Him and He in us ; we fast as Jews not as Christians. Well then, in the Services of this first Sunday, do we place the thought of Him before us, whose grace must be within us, lest in our chastisements we beat the air and humble ourselves in vain.

Now in many ways the example of Christ may be made a comfort and encouragement to us at this season of the year.

And, first of all, it will be well to insist on the circumstance that our Lord did thus retire from the world, as confirming to us the like duty, as far as we can observe it. This He did specially in the instance before us, before His entering upon His own ministry ; but it is not the only instance recorded. Before He chose His Apostles, He observed the same preparation. "It came to pass in those days that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."* Prayer through the night was a self-chastisement of the same kind as fasting. On another occasion, after sending away the multitudes, "He went up into a mountain apart to pray ;"† and on this occasion also, He seems to have remained there through great part of the night. Again, amid the excitement caused by His miracles, "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."‡ Considering that our Lord is the pattern of human nature in its perfection, surely we cannot doubt that such instances of strict devotion are intended for our imitation, if we would be perfect. But the duty is placed beyond doubt by finding similar instances in the case of the most eminent of His servants. St. Paul, in the Epistle for this day, mentions among other sufferings, that he and his brethren were "in watchings, in fastings," and in a later chapter, that he was "in fastings often." St. Peter retired to Joppa, to the house of one Simon, a tanner, on the sea-shore, and there fasted and prayed. Moses and Elijah both were supported through miraculous fasts, of the same length as our Lord's. Moses indeed, at two separate times ; as he tells us himself, "Thus I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights ; I did neither eat bread nor drink water."§ Elijah, having been fed by an angel, "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights."|| Daniel, again, "set his face unto the Lord his God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." Again, at another time, he says, "In those days, I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."¶ These are instances of fasting after the similitude of Christ.

Next, I observe, that our Saviour's fast was but introductory to His temptation. He went into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, but before He was tempted, He fasted. Nor, as is worth notice, was

* Luke vi. 12. † Matt. xiv. 23. ‡ Mark i. 35. § Deut. ix. 18. || 1 Kings xix. 8. ¶ Dan. ix. 3 ; x. 2, 3.

this a mere preparation for the conflict, but it was the cause of the conflict in good measure. Instead of simply arming Him against temptation, it is plain, that in the first instance, His retirement and abstinence exposed Him to it. Fasting was the primary occasion of it. "When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered;" and then the tempter came, bidding Him turn the stones into bread. Satan made use of His fast against Himself.

And this is singularly the case with Christians now, who endeavour to imitate Him; and it is well they should know it, for else they will be discouraged when they practice abstinences. It is commonly said, that fasting is intended to make us better Christians, to sober us, and to bring us more entirely at Christ's feet in faith and humility. This is true, viewing matters on the whole. On the whole, and at last, this effect will be produced, but it is not at all certain that it will follow at once. On the contrary, such mortifications have at the time very various effects on different persons, and are to be observed, not from their visible benefits, but from faith in the Word of God. Some men, indeed, are subdued by fasting and brought at once nearer to God; but others find it, however slight, scarcely more than an occasion of temptation. For instance, it is sometimes even made an objection to fasting, as if it were a reason for not practising it, that it makes a man irritable and ill-tempered. I confess it often may do this. Again, what very often follows from it is, a feebleness which deprives him of his command over his bodily acts, feelings, and expressions. Thus it makes him seem, for instance, to be out of temper when he is not; I mean, because his tongue, his lips, nay his brain are not in his power. He does not use the words he wishes to use, nor the accent and tone. He seems sharp when he is not; and the consciousness of this, and the reaction of that consciousness upon his mind, is a temptation, and makes him irritable, particularly if people misunderstand him, and think him what he is not. Again, weakness of body may deprive him of self-command in other ways; perhaps, he cannot help smiling or laughing, when he ought to be serious, which is evidently a most distressing and humbling trial—or when thoughts present themselves, his mind cannot throw them off, any more than if it were some dead thing, and not spirit; but they then make an impression on him which he is not able to resist. Or again, weakness of body often hinders him from fixing this mind on prayers, instead of making him pray more fervently; or again, weakness of body is often attended with languor and listlessness, and strongly tempts a man to sloth. Yet, I have not mentioned the most distressing of the effects which may follow from even the moderate exercise of this great Christian duty. It is undeniably a means of

temptation, and I say so, lest persons should be surprised and despond when they find it so. And the merciful Lord knows that so it is from experience ; and that he has experienced and thus knows it, as Scripture records, is to us a thought full of comfort. I do not mean to say, God forbid, that aught of sinful infirmity sullied his immaculate soul ; but it is plain from the sacred history that in his case, as in ours, fasting opened the way to temptation. And, perhaps, this is the truest view of such exercises, that in some wonderful unknown way they open the next world for good and evil upon us, and are an introduction to somewhat of an extraordinary conflict with the powers of evil. Stories are afloat, (whether themselves true or not matters not, they show what the voice of mankind thinks *likely* to be true,) of hermits in deserts being assaulted by Satan in strange ways, yet resisting the evil one, and chasing him away, after our Lord's pattern and in His strength ; and, I suppose, if we knew the secret history of men's minds in any age, we should find *this*, (at least, I think I am not theorizing,)—viz. a remarkable union in the case of those, who by God's grace have made advances in holy things (whatever be the case where men have not,) a union on the one hand of temptations offered to the mind, and on the other, of the mind's not being affected by them, or consenting to them, even in momentary acts of the will, but simply hating them and receiving no harm from them. At least, I can conceive this—and so far persons are evidently brought into fellowship and conformity with Christ's temptation, who was tempted yet without sin.

Let it not then distress Christians even if they find themselves exposed to thoughts from which they turn with abhorrence and terror. Rather let such a trial bring before their thoughts, with something of vividness and distinctness, the condescension of the Son of God. For if it be a trial to us creatures and sinners to have thoughts alien from our hearts presented to us, what must have been the suffering to the Eternal Word, God of God, and Light of Light, Holy and True, to have been so subjected to Satan, that he could inflict every misery on Him short of sinning? Certainly it is a trial to us to have motives and feelings imputed to us before men, by the accuser of the brethren, which we never entertained ; it is a trial to have ideas secretly suggested within, from which we shrink ; it is a trial for Satan to be allowed so to mix his own thoughts with ours, that we feel guilty even when we are not ; nay, to be able to set on fire our irrational nature, till in some sense we really sin against our will : but has not One gone before us more awful in His trial, more glorious in His victory? He was tempted in all points "like as we are, yet without sin." Surely here too Christ's temptation speaks comfort and encouragement to us.

This then is, perhaps, a truer view of the consequences of fasting, than is commonly taken. Of course, it *is* always, under God's grace, a spiritual benefit to our hearts eventually, and improves them,—through Him who worketh all in all; and it often is a sensible benefit to us at the time. Still it is often otherwise; often it but increases the excitability and susceptibility of our hearts; in all cases it is therefore to be viewed, chiefly as an approach to God—an approach to the powers of heaven—yes, and to the powers of hell. And in this point of view there is something very awful in it. For what we know, Christ's temptation is but the fulness of that which, in its degree, and according to our infirmities and corruptions, takes place in all His servants who seek Him. And if so, this surely was a strong reason for the Church's associating our season of humiliation with Christ's sojourn in the wilderness, that we might not be left to our own thoughts, and, as it were, “with the wild beasts,” and thereupon despond when we afflict ourselves; but might feel that we are what we really are, not bondmen of Satan, and children of wrath, hopelessly groaning under our burden, confessing it, and crying out, “O wretched man!” but sinners indeed, and sinners afflicting themselves, and doing penance for sin; but withal God's children, in whom repentance is fruitful, and who, while they abase themselves are exalted, and at the very time that they are throwing themselves at the foot of the Cross are still Christ's soldiers, sword in hand, fighting a generous warfare, and knowing that they have that in them, and upon them, which devils tremble at, and flee.

And this is another point which calls for distinct notice in the history of our Saviour's fasting and temptation, viz. the *victory* which attended it. He had three temptations, and thrice He conquered,—at the last He said, “Get thee behind Me, Satan;” on which “the devil leaveth Him.” This conflict and victory in the world unseen, is intimated in other passages of Scripture. The most remarkable of these is what our Lord says with reference to the demoniac, whom His Apostles could not cure. He had just descended from the Mount of Transfiguration, where, let it be observed, He seems to have gone up with His favoured Apostles to pass the night in prayer. He came down after that communion with the unseen world, and cast out the unclean spirit, and then He said, “This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting,”* which is nothing less than a plain declaration that such exercises give the soul power over the unseen world; nor can any sufficient reason be assigned for confining it to the first ages of the Gospel. And I think there is enough evidence even in what may be known afterwards of the

* Mark ix. 29.

effects of such exercises, upon persons now, (not to have recourse to history,) to show that these exercises are God's instruments for giving the Christian a high and royal power above and over his fellows.

And since prayer is not only the weapon ever necessary and sure in our conflict with the powers of evil, but a deliverance from evil is ever implied as the object of prayer, it follows that all texts whatever which speak of our addressing and prevailing on Almighty God, with prayer and fasting, do, in fact, declare this conflict and promise this victory over the evil one. Thus in the parable, the importunate widow, who represents the Church in prayer, is not only earnest *with* God, but *against* her adversary. "Avenge me of mine adversary," she says; and our "adversary" is "the devil, who, like a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist," adds St. Peter, "stedfast in the faith." Let it be observed that, in this parable, *perseverance* in prayer is especially recommended to us. And this is part of the lesson taught us by the long continuance of the Lent fast,—that we are not to gain our wishes by one day set apart for humiliation, or by one prayer, however fervent, but by "continuing instant in prayer." This too is signified to us in the account of Jacob's conflict. He, like our Saviour, was occupied in it *through* the night. Who it was whom he was permitted to meet in that solitary season, we are not told; but He with whom he wrestled, gave him strength to wrestle, and at last left a token on him, as if to show that he had prevailed only by the condescension of Him over whom he prevailed; so strengthened, he persevered till the morning broke, and asked a blessing, and He whom he asked did bless him, giving him a new name, in memory of his success. "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."* In like manner, Moses passed one of his forty days' fast in confession and intercession for the people, who had raised the golden calf. "Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down at the first; because the Lord had said He would destroy you. I prayed therefore unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, destroy not Thy people and Thine inheritance, which Thou hast redeemed through Thy greatness, which Thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand."† Again, both of Daniel's recorded fasts ended in a blessing. His first was intercessory for his people, and the prophecy of the seventy weeks was given him. The second was also rewarded with prophetic disclosures; and what is remarkable, it seems to have had an influence (if I may use such a word) upon the unseen world, from the time he began

* Gen. xxxii, 28.

† Deut. ix. 25, 26.

it.—“The Angel said, Fear not, Daniel, for *from the first day* that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and *I am come* for thy words.”* He came at the end, but he prepared to go at the beginning. But more than this, the Angel proceeds, “But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days;” just the time during which Daniel had been praying—“but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”

An Angel came to Daniel upon his fast; so too in our Lord’s instance, Angels came and ministered unto Him; and so we too may well believe, and take comfort in the thought, that even now, Angels are especially sent to those who thus seek God. Not Daniel only, but Elijah too was, during his fast, strengthened by an Angel; an Angel appeared to Cornelius, while he was fasting, and in prayer; and I do really think, that there is enough in what religious persons may see around them, to serve to *confirm* this hope thus gathered from the word of God.

“He shall give His Angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways;”† and the devil knows of this promise, for he used it in the very hour of temptation. He knows full well what our power is, and what is his own weakness. So we have nothing to fear while we remain within the shadow of the throne of the Almighty. “A thousand shall fall beside Thee, and ten thousand at Thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh Thee.” While we are found in Christ, we are partakers of His security. He has broken the power of Satan; He has gone upon the lion and adder, the young lion and the dragon hath He trod under His feet;” and henceforth evil spirits, instead of having power over us, tremble and are affrighted at every true Christian. They know he has that in him, which makes him their master; that he may, if he will, laugh them to scorn, and put them to flight. They know this well, and bear it in mind, in all their assaults upon him; sin alone gives them power over him; and their great object is, to make him sin, and therefore to surprise him into sin, knowing they have no other way of overcoming him. They try to scare him by the appearance of danger, and so to surprise him; or they approach stealthily and covertly to seduce him, and so to surprise him. But except by taking him at unawares, they can do nothing. Therefore let us be, my brethren, “not ignorant of their devices;” and as knowing them, let us watch, fast, and pray, let us keep close under the wings of the Almighty, that they may be our shield and buckler. Let us pray Him to make known to us His will,—to teach us our faults,—to take from us whatever may offend

* Dan. x. 12.

† Ps. xci. 11.

Him,—and to lead us in the way everlasting. And during this sacred season, let us look upon ourselves as on the Mount with Him—within the veil—hid with Him—not out of Him, or apart from Him, in whose presence alone is life, but with and in Him—learning of His Law with Moses, of His attributes with Elijah, of His counsels with Daniel—learning to repent, learning to confess and to amend—learning His love, and His fear—unlearning ourselves, and growing up unto Him who is our Head.

SERMON II.

LIFE THE SEASON OF REPENTANCE.

GENESIS xxvii. 34.

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

I suppose no one can read this chapter without feeling some pity for Esau. He had expected that his father would give him his blessing, but his brother was beforehand with him and got the blessing instead. He did not know what had happened, and he came in to his father to be blessed, without any suspicion that he was not to be blessed. His father, full of amazement and distress, told him that, without knowing it, for he was blind and could not see, he had already given the blessing to his brother Jacob, and he could not recal it. On hearing this, Esau burst out into “a great and exceeding bitter cry,” as the text expresses it. All his hopes were disappointed in a moment. He had built much upon this blessing. For Esau, when he was young, had committed a very great sin against God. He was his father’s first born, and in those times, as now among the rich and noble, it was a great thing to be the eldest in a family. In Esau’s case these privileges were the greater, for they were the direct gift of God. Esau, as being the eldest born of his father Isaac, inherited certain rights and privileges which Isaac, the long expected heir of Abraham, had received from Abraham. Now Esau’s sin, when he was a young man, had been

this : he parted with his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob. He thought lightly of God's great gift. How little he thought of it is plain by the price he took for it. Esau had been hunting, and he came home tired and faint. Jacob, who had remained at home, had some pottage ; and Esau begged for some of it. Jacob knew the worth of the birthright, though Esau did not ; he had faith to discern it. So, when Esau asked for pottage, he said he would give it to Esau in exchange for his birthright ; and Esau, caring nothing for the birthright, sold it to Jacob for the mess of food. This was a great sin, as being a contempt of a special gift of God—a gift which, after his father Isaac, no one in the whole world had but he.

Time went on. Esau got older, and understood more than before the value of the gift which he had thus profanely surrendered. Doubtless he would fain have got it back again if he could ; but that was impossible. Under these circumstances, as we find in the chapter which has been read in the course of to-day's service,* his father proposed to give him his solemn blessing, before he died. Now this blessing in those times carried great weight with it, as being of the nature of a prophecy, and it had been from the first intended for Jacob ; Esau had no right to it, but perhaps he thought that in this way he should in a certain sense get back his birthright, or what would stand in its place. He had parted with it easily, and he expected to regain it easily. Observe, he showed no repentance for what he had done, no self-reproach ; he had no fear that God would punish him. He only regretted his loss, without humbling himself ; and he determined to retrace his steps as quickly and quietly as he could. He went to hunt for venison, and dress it as savoury meat for his father, as his father bade him. And having got all ready, he came with it, and stood before his father. Then was it that he learned, to his misery, that God's gifts are not thus lightly to be treated ; he had sold, he could not recover. He had hoped to have had his father's blessing, but Jacob had received it instead. He had thought to regain God's favour, not by fasting and prayer, but by savoury meat, by feasting and making merry.

Such seems, on the whole, St. Paul's account of the matter, in his Epistle to the Hebrews. After having given examples of faith, he bids his Christian brethren beware lest there should be any one among them like Esau, whom he calls "a profane person ;" as having thought and acted with so little of real perception of things unseen : "looking diligently," he says, "lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of

* Second Sunday in Lent.

meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”*

This then is the meaning of Esau’s great and bitter cry, which at first sight we are disposed to pity. It is the cry of one who has rejected God, and God in turn has rejected him. It is the cry of one who has trifled with God’s mercies, and then sought to regain them when it was all too late. It is the cry of one who has not heeded the warning, “See that ye receive not the grace of God in vain,” and who has “come short of the grace of God.”† It is the cry predicted by the wise man, “Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.”‡ That subtilty and keenness of his brother Jacob, by which he got before him, and took the kingdom of heaven by violence, was God’s act; it was God’s providence punishing Esau for former sin. Esau had sinned; he had forfeited his birthright, and he could not get it back. That cry of his, what was it like? it was like the entreaty of the five foolish virgins, when the door was shut: “Lord, Lord, open to us; but He answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.”§ It was like “the weeping and gnashing of teeth” of lost souls. Yes, surely, a great and bitter cry it well might be. Well may they weep and cry, as they will most largely, who have received God’s grace and done despite to it.

The mournful history, then, which I have been reviewing, is a description of one who was first profane and then presumptuous. Esau was profane in selling his birthright; he was presumptuous in claiming the blessing. Afterwards, indeed, he did repent, but when it was too late. And I fear such as Esau was of old time, such are too many Christians now. They despise God’s blessings when they are young, and strong, and healthy; then, when they get old, or weak, or sick, they do not think of repenting, but they think they may take and enjoy the privileges of the Gospel as a matter of course, as if the sins of former years went for nothing. And then, perhaps, death comes upon them, and then after death, when it is too late, they would fain repent. Then they utter a great, bitter, and piercing cry to God; and when they see happy souls ascending towards heaven in the fulness of Gospel blessings, they say to their offended God, “Bless me, even me also, O my Father.”

Is it not, I say, quite a common case for men and women to neglect

* Heb. xii. 15—17.

† Prov. i. 28

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

§ Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

religion in their best days? They have been baptized, they have been taught their duty, they have been taught to pray, they know their creed, their conscience has been enlightened, they have leave to come to Church. This is their birthright, the privileges of their birth of water and of the Spirit; but they sell it, as Esau did. They are tempted by Satan with some bribe of this world, and they give up their birthright in exchange for what is sure to perish, and to make them perish with it. Esau was tempted by the mess of pottage which he saw in Jacob's hands. Satan arrested the eyes of his lust, and he gazed on the pottage as Eve gazed on the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve sold their birthright for the fruit of a tree—that was their bargain. Esau sold his for a mess of lentils—that was his. And men now-a-days often sell theirs, not indeed for anything so simple as fruit or herbs, but for some evil gain or other, which at the time they think worth purchasing at any price; perhaps for the enjoyment of some particular sin, or more commonly for the indulgence of general carelessness and spiritual sloth, because they do not like a strict life, and have no heart for God's service. And thus they are profane persons, for they despise the great gift of God.

And then, when all is done and over, and their souls sold to Satan, they never seem to understand that they *have* parted with their birthright. They think that they stand just where they did before they followed the world, the flesh and the devil; and that when they choose to become more decent, or more religious, they have all their privileges just as before. Like Samson, they propose to go out as at other times before, and shake themselves. And, like Esau, instead of repenting for the loss of the birthright, they come, as a matter of course, for the blessing. Esau went out to hunt for venison gaily, and promptly brought it to his father. His spirits were high; his voice was cheerful. It did not strike him that God was angry with him for what had passed years ago. He thought he was as sure of the blessing as if he had *not* sold the birthright.

And then, alas, the truth flashed upon him; he uttered a great and bitter cry, when it was too late. It would have been well, had he uttered it before he came for the blessing, not after it. He repented when it was too late—it had been well if he had repented in time. So I say of persons who have in any way sinned. It is good for them not to forget that they have sinned. It is good that they should lament and deplore their past sins. Depend upon it, they will wail over them in the next world, if they wail not here. Which is better, to utter a bitter cry now or then?—then, when the blessing of eternal life is refused them by the just Judge at the last day, or now, in order that they may gain it?

Let us be wise enough to have our agony in this world, not in the next. If we humble ourselves now, God will pardon us then. We cannot escape punishment here or hereafter ; we must take our choice, whether to suffer and mourn a little now, or much then.

Would you see how a penitent should come to God ? turn to the parable of the prodigal son. He, too, had squandered away his birth-right, as Esau did. He, too, came for the blessing, like Esau. Yes ; but how differently he came ! he came with deep confession and self-abasement. He said, " Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants : " but Esau said, " Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me." The one came for a son's privileges, the other for a servant's drudgery. The one killed and dressed his venison with his own hand, and enjoyed it not ; for the other the fatted calf was prepared, and the ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, and the best robe, and there was music and dancing.

These are thoughts, I need hardly say, especially suited to this season. From the earliest times down to this day, these weeks before Easter have been set apart every year, for the particular remembrance and confession of our sins. From the first age downward, not a year has passed but Christians have been exhorted to reflect how far they have let go their birth-right, as a preparation for their claiming the blessing. At Christmas we are born again with Christ ; at Easter we keep the Eucharistic Feast. In Lent, by penance, we join the two great sacraments together. Are you, my brethren, prepared to say,—is there any single Christian alive who will dare to profess,—that he has not in greater or less degree sinned against God's free mercies bestowed on him in Baptism without, or rather against his deserts ? Who will say that he has so improved his birthright that the blessing is his fit reward, without either sin to confess or wrath to deprecate ? See, then, the Church offers you this season for the purpose. " Now is the accepted time, now the day of salvation." Now it is that, God being your helper, you are to attempt to throw off from you the heavy burden of past transgression, to reconcile yourselves to Him who has once already imparted to you His atoning merits, and you have profaned them.

And be sure of this : that if he has any love for you, if He sees aught of good in your soul, *He* will afflict you, if you will not afflict yourselves. He will not let you escape. He has ten thousand ways of purging those whom He has chosen, from the dross and alloy with which the fine gold is defaced. He can bring diseases on you, or can visit you with misfortunes, or take away your friends, or oppress your minds with darkness, or refuse you strength to bear up against pain when it comes upon you. He can inflict on you a lingering and painful death,

He can make the "bitterness of death pass" not. We, indeed, cannot decide in the case of others, when trouble is a punishment and when not; yet this we know, that all sin brings affliction. We have no means of judging others, but we may judge ourselves. Let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged. Let us afflict ourselves, that God may not afflict us. Let us come before Him with our best offerings, that He may forgive us.

Such advice is especially suitable to an age like this, when there is an effort on all hands to multiply comforts, and to get rid of the daily inconveniences and distresses of life. Alas, my brethren, how do you know, if you avail yourselves of the luxuries of this world without restraint, but you are only postponing, and increasing by postponing, an inevitable chastisement? How do you know, but that, if you will not satisfy the debt of daily sin now, it will hereafter come upon you with interest? See whether this is not a thought which would spoil that enjoyment which even religious persons take in this world's goods, if they would but admit it. It is said that we ought to enjoy this life as the gift of God. Easy circumstances are generally thought a special happiness; it is thought a great point to get rid of annoyance or discomfort of mind and body; it is thought allowable and suitable to make use of all means available for making life pleasant. We desire, and confess we desire, to make time pass agreeably, and to live in the sunshine. All things harsh and austere are carefully put aside. We shrink from the rude lap of earth and the embrace of the elements, and we build ourselves houses in which the flesh may enjoy its lust, and the eye its pride. We aim at having all things at our will. Cold, and hunger, and hard lodging, and ill usage, and humble offices, and mean appearance, are all considered serious evils. And thus year follows year, to-morrow as to-day, till we think that this, our artificial life, is our natural state, and must and will ever be. But, O ye sons and daughters of men, what if this fair weather but ensure the storm afterwards? what if it be, that the nearer you attain to making yourselves as gods on the earth now, the greater pain lies before you in time to come, or even, (if it must be said,) the more certain becomes your ruin when time is at an end? Come down then from your high chambers at this season to avert what else may be. Sinners as ye are, act at least like the prosperous heathen, who threw his choicest trinket into the water that he might propitiate fortune. Let not the year go round and round, without a break and interruption in its circle of pleasures. Give back some of God's gifts to God, that you may safely enjoy the rest. Fast, or watch, or abound in alms, or be instant in prayer, or deny yourselves society, or pleasant books, or easy clothing or take on you some irksome task or employment; do one or other, or some, or all of these, unless you say that you have never sinned, and

may go like Esau with a light heart to take your crown. Ever bear in mind that day which will reveal all things, and will test all things "so as by fire," and which will bring us into judgment ere it lodges us in heaven.

And for those who have in any grievous way sinned or neglected God, I recommend such persons never to forget they *have* sinned; if they forget it not, God in mercy *will* forget it. I recommend them every day, morning and evening, to fall on their knees, and say, "Lord, forgive me my past sins." I recommend them to pray God to visit their sins in this world rather than in the next. I recommend them to go over their dreadful sins in their minds, (unless, alas! it makes them sin afresh to do so,) and to confess them to God again and again with great shame, and entreat His pardon. I recommend them to look on all pain and sorrow which comes on them as a *punishment* for what they once were; and to take it patiently on that account, nay, joyfully, as giving them a hope that God *is* punishing them here instead of hereafter. If they have committed sins of uncleanness, and are now in narrow circumstances, or have undutiful children, let them take their present distress as God's merciful punishment. If they have lived to the world and now have worldly anxieties, these anxieties are God's punishment. If they have led intemperate lives and now are afflicted by any malady, this is God's punishment. Let them not cease to pray under all circumstances that God will pardon them and give them back what they *have* lost. And thus proceeding, through God's grace, they will gain it, and Esau's great and bitter cry will not be heard from them.

S E R M O N I I I .

APOSTOLIC ABSTINENCE A PATTERN FOR CHRISTIANS.

1 TIMOTHY, v. 23.

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.

THIS is a remarkable verse, because it accidentally tells us so much. It is addressed to Timothy, St. Paul's companion, the first Bishop of Ephesus. Of Timothy we know very little, except that he did minis-

ter to St. Paul, and hence we might have *inferred* that he was a man of very saintly character ;—but we know little or nothing of him, except that he had been from a child a careful reader of Scripture. This indeed, by itself, in that Apostolic age, would have led us to infer, that he had risen to some great height in spiritual excellence ; though it must be confessed that instances are frequent at this day, of persons knowing the Bible well, and yet being little stricter than others in their lives, for all their knowledge. Timothy, however, had so read the Old Testament, and had so heard from St. Paul the New, that he was a true follower of the Apostle, as the Apostle was of Christ : St. Paul accordingly calls him “ my own son,” or “ my true son in the faith.” And elsewhere he says to the Philippians, that he has “ no man like-minded to Timothy, who would naturally” or truly “ care for their state.”* And still, after all, this is but a general account of him, and we seem to desire something more definite in the way of description, beyond merely knowing that he was a great saint, which conveys no clear impression to the mind. Now, in the text we have accidentally a glimpse given us of his mode of life. St. Paul does not expressly tell us that he was a man of mortified habits ; but he reveals the fact indirectly by cautioning him against an excess of mortification. “ Drink no longer water,” he says, “ but use a little wine.” It should be observed, that wine, in the southern countries, is the same ordinary beverage that beer is here ; it is nothing strong or costly. Yet even from such as this, Timothy was in the habit of abstaining, and restricting himself to water ; and, as the Apostle thought, imprudently, to the increase of his “ often infirmities.”

There is something very striking in this accidental mention of the private ways of this Apostolical Bishop. We know from history the doctrine and the life of the great saints, who lived some time after the Apostles’ age ; but we are anxious to know something more of the Apostles themselves, and their associates. We say, “ O that we could speak to St. Paul,—that we could see him in his daily walk, and hear his oral and familiar teaching !—that we could ask him what he meant by this expression in his Epistles, or what he thought of this or the other doctrine.” This is not given to us. God might give us greater light than He does ; but it is His gracious will to give us the less. Yet perhaps much more is given us in Scripture, as it has come to us, than we think, if our eyes were enlightened to discern it there. Such, for instance, is the text ; it is a sudden revelation, a glimpse of the personal character of apostolic Christians ; it is a hint which we may follow

* Phil. ii. 20.

out. For no one will deny that a very great deal of doctrine, and a very great deal of precept, goes with such a fact as this ; that this holy man, without impiously disparaging God's creation, and thanklessly rejecting God's gifts, yet, on the whole, lived a life of abstinence.

I cannot at all understand why such a life is not excellent in a Christian now, if it was the characteristic of Apostles, and friends of Apostles, then. I really do not see why the trials and persecutions, which environed them from Jews and Gentiles, their forlorn despaired state, and their necessary discomforts, should not even have exempted them from voluntary sufferings in addition, unless such self-imposed hardships were pleasing to Christ. Yet we find that St. Paul, like Timothy, who (as the Apostle says,) had known "his doctrine and manner of life,"* I say, St. Paul also, in addition to his "weariness and painfulness," "hunger and thirst," "cold and nakedness," was "in watchings often," "in fastings often." Such were holy men of old time. How far are we below them. Alas for our easy sensual life, our cowardice, our sloth ! is this the way by which the kingdom of heaven is won ? is this the way St. Paul fought a good fight, and finished his course ? or was it by putting behind his back all things on earth, and looking stedfastly towards Him who is invisible ?

Now at first sight it may not be clear why this moderation, and at least occasional abstinence, in the use of God's gifts, should be so great a duty, as our Lord, for instance, seems to imply, when He places fasting in so prominent a place in the Sermon on the Mount, with almsgiving and prayer. But thus much we are able to see, that the great duty of the gospel is love to God and man ; and that this love is quenched and extinguished by self-indulgence, and cherished by self-denial. They who enjoy this life freely, make it or self their idol : they are gross-hearted, and have no eyes to see God withal. Hence it is said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."† And again, it was the rich man who fared sumptuously every day, who neglected Lazarus ; for sensual living hardens the heart, while abstinence softens and refines it. Now, observe, I do not mean that abstinence produces this effect as a matter of course in any given person,—else all the poor ought to be patterns of Christian love,—but that where men are religiously-minded, there those out of the number will attain more in love and devotional feeling, who do exercise themselves in self-denial of the body. (I should really be disposed to say,—You must make your choice, you must in some way or another deny the flesh, or you cannot possess Christian love. Love is no common grace in its higher de-

* 2 Tim. iii. 10.

† Matt. v. 8.

grees. It is true, indeed, that, as being the necessary token of every true Christian, it must be possessed in some degree even by the weakest and humblest of Christ's servants—but in any of its higher and maturer stages, it is rare and difficult. It is easy to be amiable or upright;—it is easy to live in regular habits;—it is easy to live conscientiously, in the common sense of the word. I say, all this is comparatively easy; but one thing is needful, and one thing is often lacking,—love. We may act rightly, yet without doing our right actions from the love of God. Other motives, short of love, are good in themselves; these we may have, and not have love. Now I do not think that this defect arises from any one cause, or can be removed by any one remedy; and yet still, it does seem as if abstinence and fasting availed much towards its removal; so much so, that, granting love is necessary, then they are necessary; assuming love to be the characteristic of a Christian, so is abstinence. You may think to dispense with fasting; true; and you may neglect also to cultivate love.

And here a connection may be traced between the truth I have been insisting on, and our Lord's words, when asked why His disciples did not fast. He said, that they could not fast while the Bridegroom was with them; but that when He was taken from them, then they would fast. The one thing, which is all in all to us, is to live in Christ's presence; to hear His voice, to see His countenance. His first disciples had Him in bodily presence among them; and He spoke to them, warned them, was a pattern to them, and guided them with His eye. But when He withdrew Himself from the world of sense how should they see Him still? When their fleshly eyes and ears saw Him no more, when He had ascended whither flesh and blood cannot enter, and the barrier of the flesh was interposed between Him and them, how should they any longer see and hear Him? "Lord, whither goest Thou?" they said; and He answered to Peter, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." They were to follow Him through the veil, and to break the barrier of the flesh after His pattern. (They must, as far as they could, weaken and attenuate what stood between them and Him; they must anticipate that world where flesh and blood are not; they must discern truths which flesh and blood could not reveal; they must live a life, not of sense, but of spirit; they must practise those mortifications which former religions had enjoined, which the Pharisees and John's disciples observed, with better fruit, for a higher end, in a more heavenly way, in order to see Him who is invisible.) By fasting, Moses saw God's glory; by fasting, Elijah heard the "still small voice;" by fasting, Christ's disciples were to express their mourning over the Crucified and

Dead, over the Bridegroom taken away : but that mourning would bring Him back, that mourning would be turned to joy ; in that mourning they would see Him, they would hear of Him, again ; they would see Him as they mourned and wept. And while they mourned, so long would they see Him and rejoice—for “blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted ;” they are “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ;” hungering and thirsting after and unto righteousness,—fasting in body, that their soul may hunger and thirst after its true good ; fasting in body, that they may be satisfied in spirit ; in a “barren and dry land, where no water is,”* that they may look for Him in holiness, and behold His power and glory. “My heart is smitten down, and withered like grass, (says the Psalmist,) so that I forget to eat my bread. For the voice of my groaning, my bones will scarce cleave to my flesh. I am become like a pelican in the wilderness, and like an owl that is in the desert. I have watched, and am even as a sparrow that sitteth alone upon the house-top.”—“All day long have I been punished, and chastened every morning.” And what was the consequence ? “Nevertheless, I am alway by Thee : for Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee ? My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”†

Such was the portion which St. Paul and St. Timothy received, when they gave up this world and its blessings ; not that they might not have enjoyed them had they chose ; but because they might, and yet gave them up, therefore they received blessings out of sight instead. And in like manner, applying this to ourselves, it is our duty also to be ever moderate, and at times to abstain, in the uses of God’s earthly gifts ; nay, happy is it for us, if God’s secret grace call us on, as it called St. Paul and Timothy, to a more divine and tranquil life than that of the multitude. It is our duty to war against the flesh as they warred against it, that we may inherit the gifts of the Spirit as they inherited them. If Saints are our patterns, this surely means that we are to copy them.

Here, however, it may be objected, that there is presumption in wishing to be what Apostles and their associates were. That they had high spiritual gifts which we have not, and that to attempt their life without these, is all one with attempting to work such miracles as they did, which any one would grant to be presumptuous. There is much

* Ps. lxxiii. 2.

† Ps. cii. 4—7 ; lxxiii. 13. 22—25.

truth in such a remark so far as this, that to attempt *at once* all they did would be presumptuous; we can but put ourselves in the way. God gives second and third gifts to those who improve the first; let us improve the first, and then we know not how high may be the spiritual faculties which at length He will give us. Who is there, who, on setting out on a journey, sees before him his destination? How often, when a person is making for a place which he has never seen, he says to himself, that he cannot believe that at a certain time he really will be there? There is nothing in what he at present sees, which conveys to him the assurance of the future; and yet, in time, that future will be present. So is it as regards our spiritual course: we know not what we shall be; but begin it, and, at length, by God's grace, you will end it; not, indeed with the grace He now has given, but by fresh and fresh grace, fuller and fuller, increased according to your need. Thus you will *end*, if you do but begin; but begin not *with* the end; begin with the beginning; mount up the heavenly ladder step by step. Fasting is a duty; but we ought to fast according to our strength. God requires nothing of us beyond our strength; but the utmost according to our strength. "She has done what she could," was His word of commendation to Mary. Now, to forget or to miss this truth, is very common with beginners, even through mere ignorance or inadvertence. They know not what they can do, and what they cannot, as not having yet tried themselves. And then, when what they hoped was easy, proves a great deal too much for them, they fail, and then are dispirited. They wound their conscience, as being unable to fulfil their own resolves, and they are reduced to a kind of despair; or they are tempted to be reckless, and to give up all endeavours whatever to obey God, because they are not strong enough for every thing. And thus it often happens, that men rush from one extreme to another; and even profess themselves free to live without any rule of self-government at all, after having professed great strictness, or even extravagance, in their mode of living.

This applies of course to all duties whatever. We should be very much on our guard, when we are engaged in contemplating the lives of holy men, against attempting just what they did; which might be right indeed in them, and yet may be wrong in us. Holy men may say and do things which we have no right to say and do. Profession by word of mouth, religious language, rebuking others, and the like, may be natural and proper in them, and forced and out of place in us. We ought to attempt nothing but what we can do. There is a kind of inward feeling which often tells us what we have a right to do, and what we have not. We have often a kind of misgiving, as if what

we are tempted to do, does not really belong to us. Let us carefully attend to this inward voice. This applies especially to our devotions: common men have no right to use the prayers which advanced Christians use without offending; and if they attempt it, they become *unreal*; an offence, which all persons, who have any faith and reverence, will endeavour earnestly to avoid. But if we will thus commence our religious course, it is certain we shall soon get tired of it; we shall give it up; and our devotional feelings will thus be shown, by the event, to have been but a fashion or an impulse, which has no true excellence in it.

And here I will observe, what may be of use even to those who are most cautious and prudent in their mode of conducting their self-denials, if they have seasons in which they practise them, such as Lent ought to be to all of us. Be very much on your guard against a reaction to a careless way of life after Lent is over. It is a caution commonly and usefully given, that after a *day* of fasting we should not, when we break our fast, eat unduly; now I am giving a similar warning concerning a *season* of abstinence, and not only as regards eating largely, but against all laxity and self-indulgence. In Lent, serious thoughts are brought more regularly before the mind. The rule of abstinence which we adopt, however slight it may be in itself, acts as a continual restraint and memento upon us in other things. We cannot range at will through the field of thinking and wishing. We are more frequent also in prayer. And especially, if we feel ourselves able to be strict in our fast, the weakness of body consequent on it is an additional check upon us. Let us beware, then, lest, when this time is over, and Easter comes, we fall back into a lawless state of mind, and a random life, as if God's paradise were some Judaical heaven, where we might indulge ourselves the more freely in this world's goods, for having renounced them for a while. This grievous consequence is said actually to happen in some foreign countries, in the case of the multitude, who never will have a deep and consistent devotion while the world lasts; and we should be much on our guard, lest it happens to us in our degree. It will be a sad thought for remembrance hereafter, if we shall find after all, that we have undone what was right and profitable in our Lent exercises by a relapse in Easter-tide.

This, however, may be added for our encouragement, that to abstain for any length of time is the beginning of a habit; and we may trust, that what we have begun will continue, or tend to continue. And even though, through our frailty, we fall back, (which God forbid!) yet we shall find our self-denials easier next Lent. Nay, as I just now said, we shall be able to do more. Self-denial will become natu-

ral to us. We shall feel no desire for those indulgences, whether animal or mental, which savour of this world; and our tastes and likings will begin to be formed upon a heavenly rule. To those who are accustomed to self-denials, it is more painful to indulge than to abstain, as every one of common self-control must know, from ordinary matters of his own experience. Persons in the humbler ranks, of unrefined minds, look up to the rich, and wonder they do not do this or that, which *they* would do for certain, had they the like means. The reason is, that these rich persons, having a more perfect education, have too much taste and sense of propriety, even though religion be absent, to use their wealth in what may be called a barbarian way. Now the same dislike of self-indulgence, in all its shapes, is matured, under God's grace, in the souls of those who seek Him in the way of austerity. Timothy had to be reminded by St. Paul to use a little wine; for to drink wine was a trouble to Timothy, as putting him (to use a common phrase) out of his way. He was happy in his own way. All men have each their own way, and they wonder at each other. Each looks down upon his neighbour, because his neighbour does not like the very things he likes himself. We look down on foreigners, because their way is not ours. Happy he whose way is God's way; when he is used to it, it is as easy as any other way,—nay, much easier, for God's service is perfect freedom, whereas Satan is a cruel taskmaster.

To conclude, let those who attempt to make this Lent profitable to their souls, by such observances as have ever been in use at this season since Christianity was, beware lest they lose this world without gaining the next; for instance, as I said just now, by relapsing. Or again, by observing what is in itself right in a cold and formal manner. We can use the means, but it is God alone who blesses them. He alone turns the stones into bread, and brings water from the hard rock. He can turn all things into nourishment, but He alone can do so. Let us pray Him to bless what we venture for Him, that we may not only labour, but may receive our wages, and gather fruit unto life eternal. This world is a very little thing to give up for the next. Yet, if we give it up in heart and conversation, we shall gain the next. Let us aim at the consistent habit of mind, of looking towards God, and rejoicing in the glory which shall be revealed. In that case, whether we eat or drink, or abstain, or whatever we do, we shall do all unto Him. Let us aim at being true heirs of the promise; let us humbly aspire to be His elect, in whom He delighteth, holy and undefiled, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,” among whom we may shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.

S E R M O N I V .

CHRIST'S PRIVATIONS A MEDITATION FOR CHRISTIANS.

2 CORINTHIANS viii. 9.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.

As time goes on, and Easter draws nearer, we are called upon not only to mourn over our sins, but especially over the various sufferings which Christ our Lord and Saviour underwent on account of them. Why is it, my brethren, that we have so little feeling on the matter as we commonly have? Why is it that we are used to let the season come and go just like any other season, not thinking more of Christ than at other times, or, at least, not feeling more? Am I not right in saying that this is the case? and if so, have I not cause for asking why it is the case? We are not moved when we hear of the bitter passion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for us. We neither bewail our sins which caused it, nor have any sympathy with it. We do not suffer *with* Him. If we come to Church, we hear, and then we go away again; not distressed at all; or if distressed, only for the moment. And many do not come to Church at all; and to them, of course, this holy and solemn time is like other times. They eat, and drink, and sleep, and rise up, and go about their business and their pleasure, just as usual. They do not carry the thought of Him who died for them, along with them,—with them wherever they are,—with them “whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do.” They in no sense “live,” to use St. Paul’s words, “by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them.”

This, alas, cannot be denied. Yet, if it be so, that the Son of God came down from heaven, put aside His glory, and submitted to be despised, cruelly treated, and put to death by His own creatures,—by those whom He had made, and whom He had preserved up to that

day, and was then upholding in life and being,—is it reasonable that so great an event should not move us? Does it not stand to reason that we must be in a very irreligious state of mind, unless we have some little gratitude, some little sympathy, some little love, some little awe, some little self-reproach, some little self-abasement, some little repentance, some little desire of amendment, in consequence of what He has done and suffered for us? Or, rather, may not so great a Benefactor demand of us some overflowing gratitude, keen sympathy, fervent love, profound awe, bitter self-reproach, earnest repentance, eager desire and longing after a new heart? Who can deny all this? Why then, O my brethren, is it not so? why are things with us as they are? Alas! I sorrowfully foretel that time will go on, and Passion-tide, Good Friday, and Easter-Day, will pass by, and the weeks after it, and many of you will be just what you were—not at all nearer heaven, not at all nearer Christ in your hearts and lives, not impressed lastingly or savingly with the thought of His mercies and your own sins and demerits.

But why is this? why do you so little understand the Gospel of your salvation? why are your eyes so dim, and your ears so hard of hearing? why have you so little faith? so little of heaven in your hearts? For this one reason, my brethren, if I must express my meaning in one word, because you so little *meditate*. You do not meditate, and therefore you are not impressed.

What is meditating on Christ? it is simply this, thinking habitually and constantly of Him and of His deeds and sufferings. It is to have Him before our minds as One whom we may contemplate, worship, and address when we rise up, when we lie down, when we eat and drink, when we are at home and abroad, when we are working, or walking, or at rest, when we are alone, and again when we are in company; this is meditating. And by this, and nothing short of this, will our hearts come to feel as they ought. We have stony hearts, hearts as hard as the high-ways; the history of Christ makes no impression on them. And yet, if we would be saved, we must have tender, sensitive, living hearts; our hearts must be broken, must be broken up like ground, and dug, and watered, and tended, and cultivated, till they become as gardens, gardens of Eden, acceptable to our God, gardens in which the Lord God may walk and dwell; filled, not with briars and thorns, but with all sweet-smelling and useful plants, with heavenly trees and flowers. The dry and barren waste must burst forth into springs of living water. This change must take place in our hearts if we would be saved; in a word, we must have what we have not by nature, faith and love; and how is this to be effected, under God's grace, but by godly and practical meditation through the day?

St. Peter describes what I mean, when he says, speaking of Christ, "Whom having not seen ye love: in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."*

Christ is gone away; He is not seen; we never saw Him, we only read and hear of Him. It is an old saying, "out of sight, out of mind." Be sure, so it *will* be, so it *must* be with us, as regards our blessed Saviour, unless we make continual efforts all through the day to think of Him, His love, His precepts, His gifts, and His promises. We must recall to mind what we read in the Gospels and in holy books about Him; we must bring before us what we have heard in Church; we must pray God to enable us to do so, to bless the doing so, and to make us do so in a simple-minded, sincere, and reverential spirit. In a word, we must meditate, for all this is meditation; and this even the most unlearned person can do, and will do, if he has a will to do it.

Now of such meditation, or thinking over Christ's deeds and sufferings, I will say two things; the first of which would be too plain to mention, except that, did I not mention it, I might seem to forget it, whereas, I grant it. It is this: that such meditation is not at all pleasant at first. I know it; people will find it at first very irksome, and their minds will gladly slip away to other subjects. True: but consider, if Christ thought your salvation worth the great sacrifice of voluntary sufferings for you, should not you think (what is your own concern) your own salvation, worth the slight sacrifice of learning to meditate upon those sufferings? Can a less thing be asked of you, than, when He has done the work, that you should only have to believe in it and accept it?

And my second remark is this: that it is only by slow degrees that meditation is able to soften our hard hearts, and that the history of Christ's trials and sorrows really moves us. It is not once thinking of Christ or twice thinking of Christ that will do it. It is by going on quietly and steadily, with the thought of Him in our mind's eye, that by little and little we shall gain something of warmth, light, life, and love. We shall not perceive ourselves changing. It will be like the unfolding of the leaves in spring. You do not see them grow; you cannot, by watching, detect it. But every day, as it passes, has done something for them; and you are able, perhaps, every morning to say that they are more advanced than yesterday. So is it with our souls; not indeed every morning, but at certain periods, we are able to see that we are more alive and religious than we were, though during the interval we were not conscious that we were advancing.

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

Now, then, as if by way of specimen, I will say a few words upon the voluntary self-abasement of Christ, to suggest to you thoughts, which you ought, indeed, to bear about you at all times, but especially at this most holy season of the year; thoughts which will in their poor measure (please God) prepare you for seeing Christ in heaven, and, in the meanwhile, will prepare you for seeing Him in His Easter Festival. Easter-Day comes but once a year; it is short like other days. O that we may make much of it, that we may make the most of it, that we may enjoy it! O that it may not pass over like other days, and leave us no fragrance after it to remind us of it!

Come then, my brethren, at this time, before the solemn days are present, and let us review some of the privations of the Son of God made man, which should be your meditation through these holy weeks.

And, chiefly, He seems to speak to the poor. He came in *poverty*. St. Paul says, in the text, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." Let not the poor suppose that their hardships are their own only, and that no one else ever felt them. The Most High God, God the Son, who had reigned with the Father from everlasting, supremely blessed, He, even He, became a poor man, and suffered the hardships of the poor. What are their hardships? I suppose such as these:—that they have bad lodging, bad clothing, not enough to eat, or of a poor kind, that they have few pleasures or amusements, that they are despised, that they are dependent upon others for their living, and that they have no prospects for the future. Now how was it with Christ, the Son of the Living God? Where was He born? In a stable. I suppose not many men suffer an indignity so great? born, not in quiet and comfort, but amid the brute cattle; and what was His first cradle, if I may so call it? a manger. Such were the beginnings of His earthly life; nor did His condition mend as life went on. He says on one occasion; "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."* He had no home. He was, when he began to preach, what would now be called with contempt a vagrant. There are persons who are obliged to sleep where they can; such, in good measure, seems to have been our blessed Lord. We hear of Martha who was hospitable to Him, and of others; but, though little is told us, He seems, from what is told, to have lived a rougher life than any village peasant. He was forty days in the wilderness: where do you think He slept then? in caves of the rock. And who were His companions then? worse companions even

* Luke ix. 58.

than those He was born among. He was born in a cave ; He passed forty nights in a cave ; but on His birth, at least, they were tame beasts whom He was among, the ox and the ass. But during His forty days' temptation He "was with the wild beasts." Those caverns in the wilderness are filled with fierce and poisonous creatures. There Christ slept ; and doubtless, but for His Father's unseen arm and His own sanctity, they would have fallen upon Him.

Again, cold is another hardship which sensibly afflicts us. This, too, Christ endured. He remained whole nights in prayer upon the mountains. He rose before day and went into solitary places to pray. He was on the sea at night.

Heat is a suffering which does not afflict us much in our country, but is very formidable in the eastern parts, where our Saviour lived. Men keep at home when the sun is high lest it should harm them ; yet we read of His sitting down on Jacob's well at mid-day, being wearied with his journey.

Observe this also, to which I have already referred. He was constantly journeying during His ministry, and journeying on foot. Once He rode into Jerusalem, to fulfil a prophecy.

Again, He endured hunger and thirst. He was athirst at the well, and asked the Samaritan woman to give Him water to drink. He was hungry in the wilderness, when He fasted forty days. At another time, when actively engaged in His works of mercy, He and His disciples had no time to eat bread.* And indeed, wandering about as He did, He seldom could have been certain of a meal. And what was the kind of food He lived on ? He was much in the neighbourhood of an inland sea or lake, called the sea of Gennesaret, or Tiberias, and He and His Apostles lived on bread and fish ; as spare a diet as poor men have now, or sparer. We hear, on one well known occasion, of five barley loaves and two small fishes. After His resurrection He provided for His Apostles—"a fire, and fish laid thereon, and bread ;"† as it would seem, their usual fare.

Yet it deserves notice that, in spite of this penury, He and His were in the custom of giving something to the poor notwithstanding. They did not allow themselves to make the most even of the little they had. When the traitor Judas rose up and went out to betray Him, and Jesus spoke to him, some of the Apostles thought that He was giving directions about alms to the poor ; this shows His practice.

And He was, as need scarcely be added, quite dependent on others. Sometimes rich men entertained Him. Somestimes, as I have said,

* Mark vi. 31.

† John xxi 9.

pious persons ministered to Him of their substance.* He lived, in His own blessed words, like the ravens, whom God feeds, or like the grass of the field, which God clothes.

Need I add that He had few pleasures, few recreations ? it is hardly in place to speak on such a topic in the case of One who came from God, and who had other thoughts and ways than we have. Yet there are innocent enjoyments which God gives us here to counterbalance the troubles of life ; our Lord was exposed to the trouble, and might have taken also its compensation. But He refrained. It has been observed, that He is never spoken of as mirthful ; we often read of His sighing, groaning, and weeping. He was “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

Now let us proceed to other greater sufferings, which He took on Himself when He became poor. Contempt, hatred, and persecution from the world was one of these. Even in His infancy Mary had to flee with Him into Egypt to hinder Herod from killing Him. When He returned, it was not safe to dwell in Judea, and He was brought up at Nazareth, a place of evil name, where the holy Virgin had been when Gabriel the Angel came to her. I need not say how He was set at nought and persecuted by the Pharisees and priests when He began to preach, and had again and again to flee for His life, which they were bent on taking.

Another great suffering from which our Lord did not withdraw Himself, was what in our case we call bereavement, the loss of relations or friends by death. This, indeed, He could hardly sustain literally, who had but one earthly near relation, and so few friends ; but even this affliction He tasted for our sakes. Lazarus was His friend, and He lost him. He knew, indeed, that He could restore him, and He did. Yet still He bitterly lamented him, for whatever reason, so that the Jews said, “Behold how He loved him.” But a greater and truer bereavement, as far as we dare speak of it, was His original act of humiliation itself, in leaving His heavenly glory and coming down on earth. This, of course is a great mystery to us from beginning to end ; still, He certainly vouchsafes to speak, through His Apostle, of His “emptying Himself” of His glory ; so that we may fairly and reverently consider it as an unspeakable and wondrous bereavement, which He underwent, in being for the time, as it were, disinherited, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh.

But all these were but the beginning of sorrows with Him ; to see their fulness we must look on to His passion. In the anguish which He

* Luke viii. 3.

then endured, we see all His other sorrows concentrated and exceeded ; though I shall say little of it now, when His “time is not yet come.”

But I will observe thus much ; first, what is very wonderful and awful, the overwhelming fear He had of His sufferings before they came. This shows how great they were ; but it would seem besides this, as if He had decreed to go through all trials for us, and, among them, the trial of fear. He says, “Now is My soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save Me from this hour ; but for this cause came I unto this hour.” And when the hour came, this terror formed the beginning of His sufferings, and caused His agony and bloody sweat. He prayed, “O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ; nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done.” St. Luke adds ; “And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”*

Next, He was betrayed to death by one of His own friends. What a bitter stroke was this ! He was lonely enough without this : but in this last trial, one of the twelve Apostles, His own familiar friend, betrayed Him, and the others forsook Him and fled ; though St. Peter and St. John afterwards recovered heart a little, and followed Him. Yet soon St. Peter himself incurred a worse sin, by denying Him thrice. How affectionately He felt towards them, and how He drew towards them with a natural movement of heart upon the approach of His trial, though they disappointed Him, is plain from the words He used towards them at His Last Supper ; “He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.”†

Soon after this His sufferings began ; and both in soul and in body was this Holy and Blessed Saviour, the Son of God, and Lord of life, given over to the malice of the great enemy of God and man. Job was given over to Satan in the Old Testament, but within prescribed limits ; first, the evil one was not allowed to touch his person, and afterwards though his person, yet not his life. But Satan had power to triumph, or what he thought was triumphing, over the life of Christ, who confesses to His persecutors, “This is your hour, and the power of darkness.”‡ His head was crowned and torn with thorns, and bruised with staves ; His face was defiled with spitting ; His shoulders were weighed down with the heavy cross ; His back was rent and gashed with scourges ; His hands and feet gored through with nails ; His side, by way of contumely, wounded with the spear ; His mouth parched with intolerable thirst ; and His soul so bedarkened, that He cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”§ And thus He hung upon the Cross for six

* John xii. 27. Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxii. 42.

† Luke xxii. 15.

‡ Ibid. 53.

§ Matt. xxvii. 46.

hours, His whole body one wound, exposed almost naked to the eyes of men, "despising the shame,"* and railed at, taunted, and cursed by all who saw Him. Surely to Him alone, in their fulness, apply the Prophet's words; "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger."†

How little are our sorrows to these! how little is our pain, our hardships, our persecutions, compared with those which Christ voluntarily undertook for us? If He, the sinless, underwent these, what wonder is it that we sinners should endure, if it so be, the hundredth part of them? How base and miserable are we, for understanding them so little, for being so little impressed by them! Alas! if we felt them as we ought, of course they would be to us, at seasons such as is now coming, far worse than what the death of a friend is, or his painful illness. We should not be able at such times to take pleasure in this world; we should lose our enjoyment of things of earth; we should lose our appetite, and be sick at heart, and only as a matter of duty eat, and drink, and go about our work. The Holy Season on which we shall soon enter would be a week of mourning, as when a dead body is in a house. We cannot, indeed, thus feel merely because we wish and ought so to feel. We cannot force ourselves into so feeling. I do not exhort this man or that so to feel, since it is not in his power. We cannot work ourselves up into such feelings; or, if we can it is better we should not, because it is a working up which is bad. Deep feeling is but the natural or necessary attendant on a holy heart. But though we cannot at our will thus feel, and at once, we can go the way thus to feel. We can grow in grace till we thus feel. And, meanwhile, we can observe such an outward abstinence from the innocent pleasures and comforts of life, as may prepare us for thus feeling; such an abstinence as we should spontaneously observe if we did thus feel. We may meditate upon Christ's sufferings, by which we *shall* gradually, as time goes on, be brought to these deep feelings. We may pray God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, to *make* us feel; to give us the spirit of gratitude, love, reverence, self-abasement, godly fear, repentance, holiness, and lively faith.

* Heb. xii. 2.

† Lam. i. 12.

SERMON V.

CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD MADE MAN.

HEBREWS ix. 11.

Christ being come, an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building.

BEFORE the Passover the Jews numbered fourteen days, and then the feast came. It was to be the fourteenth day of the month, at even, and to mark the beginning of that period more distinctly, it was made the beginning of months, that is, the first month of the year. We then, if our Easter answers to the Passover, as substance answers to shadow, may well account that from this day, which is fourteen days before Easter, a more sacred season begins. And so our Church seems to have determined it, since from this day the character of the Services changes. Henceforth they have more immediate reference to Him, whose death and resurrection we are soon to commemorate. The first weeks in Lent are spent in repentance, though with the thought of Him withal, who alone can give grace and power to our penitential exercises: the last without precluding repentance, are more especially consecrated to the thought of those sufferings, whereby grace and power were purchased for us.

The history of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; of Dinah, Jacob's daughter; and of Joseph in Potipher's house; the account of our Lord's temptation; and the parable of the man out of whom the evil spirit went and returned sevenfold, which have been read on Sundays at this season, may fitly be called penitential subjects; and of the same character have been the Epistles. On the other hand, to-day's Epistle,* from which the text is taken, speaks of Christ's Incarnation and Atonement; while the Gospel tells us of His Divinity, He being that same God who, as the first Morning Lesson relates, called Himself

* Fifth Sunday in Lent.

in the bush "I am that I am." And so again, next Sunday's Epistle is also upon our Lord's Divinity and voluntary humiliation, and one of the Lessons and the Gospel contain the sacred narrative of His passion and death. The other second Lesson is also on the subject of His humiliation, from St. Paul. And further : all four first Lessons of to-day and next Sunday relate to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, which is the type of our redemption.

Let us then to-day, in accordance with the apparent disposition of our Services, remind ourselves of one or two of the great truths which the Epistle contains ;—of course we cannot do so with any great exactness or completeness ; but still, sufficiently to serve, through God's mercy, as a sort of preparation for the solemn days which lie before us in the course of the next fortnight. It will be a fitting preparation, please God, for Good-Friday, to bear in mind who our Lord is, and what He has done for us. And, at present, let us confine ourselves to this one subject, who our Lord is,—God and man in one Person. On this most sacred and awful subject, I shall speak as simply and plainly as I can ; merely stating what has to be stated, after the pattern of the Creeds, and leaving those who hear me, as the Creeds leave them, to receive it into their hearts fruitfully, and to improve it, under God's grace, for themselves.

Let us, I say, consider who Christ is, as the Epistle for the day sets forth in the words of the text.

1. First, Christ is God : from eternity He was the Living and True God. This is not mentioned expressly in the Epistle for this day, though it is significantly implied there in various ways ; but it is expressly stated, and that by Himself, in the Gospel. He says there, "Before Abraham was, I am ;"* by which words He declares that He did not begin to exist from the Virgin's womb, but had been in existence before. And by using the words *I am*, He seems to allude, as I have already said, to the Name of God, which was revealed to Moses in the burning bush, when he was bid say to the children of Israel, "*I am* hath sent me unto you."† Again : St. Paul says of Christ, that He was "in the form of God," and "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," yet "made Himself of no reputation." In like manner St. John says ; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And St. Thomas addressed Him as his Lord and his God ; and St. Paul declares that He is "God over all, blessed for ever ;" and the prophet Isaiah, that He is "the mighty God, the Everlasting Father ;" and St. Paul again, that He is "our great God and Saviour ;"

* John viii. 58.

† Exod. iii. 14.

and St. Sude, that He is our only Sovereign God and Lord.”* It is not necessary, surely, to enlarge on this point, which is constantly brought before us in Scripture and in our Services. “Day by day we magnify Him, and we worship His name ever world without end ;” which would be idolatry were He not the Very and Eternal God, our Maker and Lord. We know, indeed, that the Father is God also, and so is the Holy Ghost ; but still Christ is God and Lord, most fully, completely, and entirely, in all attributes as perfect and as adorable, as if nothing had been told us of Father or of Holy Ghost ; as much to be adored, as, before He came in the flesh, the Father was adored by the Jews, and is now to be adored by us “in spirit and in truth.” For He tells us expressly Himself, “He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father ;” and “all men” are to “honour the Son, even as they honour the Father ;” and “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.”†

2. And here we are brought to the second point of doctrine which it is necessary to speak of, that while our Lord is God He is also the Son of God, or rather, that He is God because He is the Son of God. We are apt, at first hearing, to say that He is God though He is the Son of God, marvelling at the mystery. But what to man is a mystery, to God is a cause. He is God, not *though*, but *because* He is the Son of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” and That which is begotten of God is God. I do not say that we could presume thus to reason for ourselves, but Scripture concludes for us. Christ tells us Himself, “as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” And St. Paul says, that He is “the brightness of God’s glory, and the express image of His Person.”‡ And thus, though we could not presume to reason of ourselves that He that is begotten of God is God, as if it became us to reason at all about such ineffable things, yet, by the light of Scripture, we may. And after all, if the truth must be said, it is surely not so marvellous and mysterious that the Son of God should be God, as that there should be a Son of God at all. It is as little level to natural reason that God should have a Son, as that, if there be a Son, He must be God because He is the Son. Both are mysteries ; and if we admit, with Scripture, that there be an Only-begotten Son, it is even less to admit, what Scripture also declares, that that Only-begotten Son is God because He is Only-begotten. And this is what makes the doctrine of our Lord’s Eternal Sonship of

* Phil. ii. 6, 7. John i. 1 ; xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5. Isa. ix. Tit. ii. 13. Jude 4.

† John xiv. 10 ; v. 23.

‡ John v. 26. Heb. i. 3.

such supreme importance, that **He** is God because **He** is begotten of **God** ; and they who give up the latter truth, are in the way to give up, or will be found already to have given up, the former. The great safeguard to the doctrine of our Lord's divinity is the doctrine of His Sonship ; we realize that **He** is **God** only when we acknowledge **Him** to be by nature and from eternity **Son**.

Nay, our Lord's Sonship is not only the guarantee to us of His God-head, but also the antecedent of His incarnation. As the **Son** was **God**, so was the **Son** suitably made man ; it belonged to **Him** to have the Father's perfections ; it became **Him** to assume a servant's form. We must beware of supposing that the Persons of the Ever-blessed and All-holy Trinity differ from each other only in this, that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father. They differ in this besides, that the Father *is* the Father, and the Son *is* the Son. While they are one in substance, each has distinct characteristics which the other has not. Surely those sacred Names have a meaning in them, and must not lightly be passed over. And they will be found, if we reverently study them, to supply a very merciful use towards our understanding Scripture ; for we shall see a fitness, I say, now that that sacred truth is revealed, in the *Son* of God taking flesh, and we shall thereby understand better what **He** says of Himself in the Gospels. The Son of God became the Son a second time, though not a second Son, by becoming man. He was a Son both before His incarnation, and, by a second mystery, after it. From eternity He had been the Only-begotten in the bosom of the Father ; and when **He** came on earth, this chief relation to the Father remained unaltered ; still, **He** was a Son, when in the form of a servant, still performing the will of the Father, as His Father's Word and Wisdom, manifesting His glory and accomplishing His purposes.

For instance, take the following passages of Scripture : " I do nothing of myself ; " " He that sent Me is with Me ; " " the Father hath not left Me alone ; " " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work ; " " Whatsoever I speak, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak ; " " I am in the Father, and the Father in me."* Now, it is true, these passages may be taken of our Lord's human nature ; but, surely, if we confine them to this interpretation, we run the risk of viewing Christ as two separate beings, not as one Person ; or, again, of gradually forgetting and explaining away the doctrine of His divinity altogether. If we speak as if our Lord had a human personality, then, if **He** has another as **God**, **He** is not one Person ; and if **He** has not, **He** is not **God**.

* John. viii. 28, 29 ; v. 17† ; xii. 50 ; xiv. 10.

Such passages, then, as the foregoing, would seem to speak neither of Christ's human nature, nor of His divine, solely, but of both together ; that is, of Him who being the Son of God is also man. He who spoke was one really existing Person, and He, that one Living and Almighty Son, both God and man, was the brightness of God and His Power, and wrought what His Father and He willed, and was in the Father and the Father in Him, both from eternity and in time. From eternity He was this, and did this as God ; and in time He was this, and did this in that manhood which He assumed. It was therefore true of Him *altogether*, when He spoke, that He was not alone, nor spoke or wrought of Himself, but where He was, there was the Father, and whoso had seen Him had seen the Father, whether we think of Him as God or as man.

Again, we read in Scripture of His being sent by the Father, addressing the Father, interceding to Him for His disciples, and declaring to them that His Father is greater than He. In what sense says and does He all this ? Some will be apt to say that He speaks only in His human nature ; which words are perplexing to the mind that tries really to contemplate Him as Scripture describes Him, as if He were speaking only under a character, and not in His Person. No ; it is truer to say that He, that One All-gracious Son of God, who had been with the Father from the beginning, equal in all divine perfections and one in substance, but subordinate as being the Son,—as He had ever been His Word, and Wisdom, and Counsel, and Will, and Power, in heaven,—so after His incarnation, and upon the earth, still spoke and acted after, yet with the Father as before, though in a new nature, which He had put on, and in humiliation.

This, then, is the second point of doctrine which I had to mention, that our Lord was not only God, but the Son of God. We know more than that God took on Him our flesh ; though all is mysterious, we have a point of knowledge further and more distinct, viz. that it was neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son of the Father, God the Son, God from God, and Light from Light, who came down upon earth, and who thus, though graciously taking on Him a new nature, remained as He had been from everlasting, the *Son* of the Father, and spoke and acted towards the Father as a Son.

3. Now, thirdly, let us proceed to consider His mercy in taking on Him our nature, and what that act of mercy implies. The text speaks of "a greater and more perfect tabernacle," that is, greater than anything earthly. This means His pure and sinless flesh, which was miraculously formed of the substance of the Blessed Virgin, and therefore called "not of this building," or more literally, "not of this creation," for it was a new creation by which He was formed, even by the de-

scent of the Holy Ghost. This was the new and perfect tabernacle into which He entered ; entered, but not to be confined, not to be circumscribed by it. The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands ; though His own hands “made it and fashioned it,” still He did not cease to be what He was because He became man, but was still the Infinite God, manifested in, not altered by the flesh. He took upon Him our nature, as an instrument of His purposes, not as an agent in the work. What is one thing cannot become another ; His manhood remained human, and His godhead remained divine. God became man, yet was still God ; having His manhood as an adjunct, perfect in its kind, but dependent upon His godhead. So much so, that unless Scripture had expressly called Him man, we might well have scrupled to do so. Left to ourselves, we might have felt it more reverential to have spoken of Him as *incarnate* indeed, come in human flesh, human and the like, but not simply as man. But St. Paul speaks in plain terms of our one Mediator as “the man Christ Jesus,” not to speak of our Lord’s own words on the subject. Still, we must ever remember, that though He was perfect man in nature, He was not man in exactly the same sense in which any one of us is a man. Though man, He was not, strictly speaking, in the English sense of the word, *a* man ; He was not such as one of us, and one out of a number. He was man because He had our human nature wholly and perfectly, but His Person is not human like ours, but divine. He who was from eternity, continued one and the same, but with an addition. His incarnation was a “taking of the manhood into God.” As He had no earthly father, so has He no human personality. We may not speak of Him as we speak of any individual man, acting from and governed by a human intelligence within Him, but He was God, acting not only as God from eternity, but now through the flesh also, when He would. He was not a man made God, but God made man.

(1.) Thus, when He prayed to His Father, it was not the prayer of a man supplicating God, but of the Eternal Son of God who had ever shared the glory of the Father, addressing Him, as before, but under far other circumstances, and in a new way, not according to those most intimate and ineffable relations which belonged to Him who was in the bosom of the Father, but in the economy of redemption, and in a lower world, viz. through the feelings and thoughts of human nature. When He wept at the grave of Lazarus, or sighed at the Jews’ hardness of heart, or looked round about in anger, or compassionated the multitudes, He manifested the tender mercy, the compassion, the long-suffering, the fearful wrath of Almighty God, not in Himself, as from

eternity, but as if indirectly through the outlets of that manhood, with which He had clothed Himself.

(2.) When "He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,"* He exerted the virtue of His Divine Essence through the properties and circumstances of the flesh. When He breathed on His disciples and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost,"† He vouchsafed to give His Holy Spirit through the breath of His human nature. When virtue went out of Him, so that whoso touched Him was made whole, here too, in like manner, He shows us that He was not an individual man, like any of us, but God acting through human nature as His assumed instrument.

(3.) When He poured out His precious blood upon the Cross, it was not a man's blood, though it belonged to His manhood, but blood full of power and virtue, instinct with life and grace, as issuing most mysteriously from Him who was the Creator of the world. And the case is the same in every successive communication of Himself to individual Christians. As He became the Atoning Sacrifice through the means of His human nature, so is He our High Priest in heaven by means of the same. He is now in heaven, entered into the Holy place, interceding for us, and dispensing blessings to us. He gives us abundantly of His Spirit; but still He gives It not at once through His Divine nature, though from eternity the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son as well as from the Father, but by means of that incorruptible flesh which He has taken on Him. For Christ is come a High Priest through the perfect tabernacle which He assumed, a tabernacle not of this creation, or in the ordinary course of nature, but framed miraculously of the substance of the Virgin by the Holy Ghost; and therefore the streams of life flow to us from Him, as God indeed, but still as God incarnate. "That which quickeneth us is the Spirit of the Second Adam, and His flesh is that wherewith He quickeneth."‡

(4.) I shall mention a fourth and last point in this great mystery. I have said that our High Priest and Saviour, the Son of God, when He took our nature upon Him, did act through it, without ceasing to be what He was before, making it the instrument of His gracious purposes. But it must not be supposed, because it was an instrument, or because in the text it is called a tabernacle, that therefore it was not intimately one with Him, or that it was merely like what is commonly meant by a tabernacle, which a man dwells in, and may come in and out of; or like an instrument, which a man takes up and lays down.

* John ix. 6.

† John xx. 22.

‡ Hooker, Eccl. Pol. v. 56. § 8.

Far from it ; though His Divine Nature was sovereign and supreme when He became incarnate, yet the manhood which He assumed was not kept at a distance from Him (if I may so speak) as a mere instrument, or put on as a mere garment, or entered as a mere tabernacle, but it was really taken into the closest and most ineffable union with Him. He received it into His Divine Essence (if I may dare so to speak) almost as a new attribute of His Person ; of course I speak by way of analogy, but I mean as singly and indissolubly. Let us consider what is meant by God's justice, or mercy, or wisdom, and we shall perhaps have some glimpse of the meaning of the inspired writers, when they speak of the Son's incarnation. If we said that the Son of God is just or merciful, we should mean that these are attributes which attach to all He is or was. Whatever He says, whatever He designs, whatever He works, He is just and loving when He thus says, designs, or works. There never was a moment, there never was an act or providence, in which God wrought, without being just and loving, even though both attributes may not be exercised at once in the same act. In somewhat the same way the Son of God is man ; all that is necessary to constitute a perfect manhood is attached to His Eternal Person absolutely and entirely, belonging to Him as really and fully as His justice, truth, or power ; so that it would be as unmeaning to speak of dividing one of His attributes from Him as to separate from Him His manhood.

This throws light upon the Catholic tenet, that the Godhead and Manhood were "joined together in One Person, never to be divided ;" words which also serve too often as a means of bringing home to us how faintly we master the true doctrine : for we are sometimes tempted to ask, Where it is said in Scripture, that the manhood shall never be divided from the Godhead ? which is as incongruous a question as if we were to ask whether God's justice, mercy, or holiness, can be divided from Him ; or whether Scripture ever declares that this or that attribute may not disappear : for as these have no real existence except as *in* God, neither has our Lord's manhood except as in His divine nature, it never subsisted except as attached to His divinity : it has no subsistence in itself.

Thus all that He did and said on earth, was but the immediate deed and word of God the Son acting by means of His human tabernacle. He surrounded Himself with it ; He lodged it within Him ; and thenceforth the Eternal Word, the Son of God, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity, had two natures, the one His own as really as the other, divine and human ; and He acted through both of them, sometimes through both at once, sometimes through One and not through

the other, as Almighty God acts sometimes by the attribute of justice, sometimes by that of love, sometimes through both together. He was as entirely man as if He had ceased to be God, as fully God as if He had never become man, as fully both at once as He was in subsistence at all.

The Athanasian Creed expresses all this as follows: "The right faith is, that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God is God and man; God of the substance of His Father, begotten before the worlds: and man of the substance of His Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting: who, although He be God and man, yet is not two but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh," as if He could cease to be God, "but by taking of the manhood into God," taking it into His Divine person as His own: "one altogether, not by confusion of substance," not by the Divine Nature and human becoming one nature, as if He ceased to be God, and did not become a man, "but by unity of *Person*." This is what His unity consists in,—not unity of nature, but that He who came on earth, was the very Same who had been from everlasting.

In conclusion, let me observe, that one ought not to speak, one ought not to hear, such high truths, without great reverence and awe, and preparation of mind. And this is a reason, perhaps, why this is a proper season for dwelling on them; when we have been engaged, not in mirth and festivity, but in chastening and sobering ourselves. The Psalmist says, "Lord I am not high minded; I have no proud looks. I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me. But I refrain my soul and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother." When we are engaged in weaning ourselves from this world, when we are denying ourselves even lawful things, when we have a subdued tone of thought and feeling, then is an allowable time surely to speak of the high mysteries of the faith. And then, too, are they especially a comfort to us; but those who neglect fasting, make light of orthodoxy too. But to those who through God's grace are otherwise minded, the creed of the Church brings relief; when, amid the gloom of their own hearts, Christ rises like the sun of righteousness, giving them peace for disquiet, "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."

SERMON VI.

THE INCARNATE SON, A SUFFERER AND SACRIFICE.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 8.

Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

HE who thus humbled Himself, being first made man, then dying, and that upon the shameful and agonizing Cross, was the same who from eternity had been "in the form of God," and was "equal with God," as the Apostle declares in a preceding verse. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God;" thus speaks St. John, a second witness to the same great and awful truth. And he, too, goes on to say, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And at the close of his Gospel, as we know, he gives an account of our Lord's death upon the Cross.

We are now approaching that most sacred day when we commemorate Christ's passion and death. Let us try to fix our minds upon this great thought. Let us try, what is so very difficult, to put off other thoughts, to clear our minds of things transitory, temporal, and earthly, and to occupy them with the contemplation of the Eternal Priest and His one ever-enduring Sacrifice;—that Sacrifice which, though completed once for all on Calvary, yet ever abideth, and, in its power and its grace, is ever present among us, and is at all times gratefully and awfully to be commemorated, but now especially, when the time of year is come at which it was made. Let us look upon Him who was lifted up that He might draw us to Him; and, by being drawn one and all to Him, let us be drawn to each other, so that we may understand and feel that He has redeemed us one and all, and that, unless we love one another, we cannot really have love to Him who laid down His life for us.

With the hope, then, of suggesting to you some serious thoughts for

the week which begins with this day,* I will make a few remarks, such as the text suggests, upon that dreadful yet most joyful event, the passion and death of our Lord.

And, first, it ought not to be necessary to say, though it may be necessary even because it is so obvious,—(for, what is very plain is sometimes taken for granted by those who know it, and hence is never heard by others at all,)—this, I say, in the first place, must be ever remembered, that Christ's death was not a mere martyrdom. A martyr is one who dies for the Church, who is put to death for preaching and maintaining the truth. Christ, indeed, was put to death for preaching the Gospel; yet He was not a Martyr, but He was much more than a Martyr. Had He been a mere man, He would have been rightly called a Martyr, but as He was not a mere man, so He was not a mere Martyr. Man dies as a Martyr, but the Son of God dies as an Atoning Sacrifice.

Here then, as you see, we are at once introduced into a very mysterious subject, though one which concerns us most nearly. There was a virtue in His death, which there could be in no other, for He was God. We, indeed, could not have told beforehand what would follow from so high an event as God becoming incarnate and dying on the Cross; but that something extraordinary and high would issue from it, we might have been quite sure, though nothing had been told us. He would not have so humbled Himself for nought; He could not so humble Himself, (if I may use the expression,) without momentous consequences.

It would be well if we opened our minds to what is meant by the doctrine of the Son of God dying on the Cross for us. I do not say we shall ever be able to solve the mystery of it, but we may understand in what the Mystery consists; and that is what many men are deficient in. They have no clear views what the truth of the matter is; if they had, it would make them more serious than they are. Let it be understood, then, that the Almighty Son of God, who had been in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, became man; became man as truly as He was always God. He was God from God, as the Creed says; that is, as being the Son of the Father, He had all those infinite perfections from the Father which the Father had. He was of one substance with the Father, and was God, because the Father was God. He was truly God, but He became as truly man. He became man, yet so as not to cease in any respect being what He was before. He added a new nature to Himself, yet so intimately, that it was *as if* He

had actually left His former self, which He did not. "The Word became flesh:" even this would seem mystery and marvel enough, but even this was not all; not only was He "made man," but, as the Creed goes on to state, He "was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried."

Now here, I say, is a fresh mystery in the history of His humiliation, and the thought of it will cast a new and solemn light on the chapters we shall read during the week. I have said that after His incarnation, man's nature was as much and as truly Christ's as His divine attributes; St. Paul even speaks of God "purchasing us with His own blood," and of the "Lord of glory" being "killed,"—expressions which, more than any other, show how absolutely and simply He had put upon Him the nature of man. As the soul acts through the body as its instrument,—in a more perfect way, but as intimately, did the Eternal Word of God act through the manhood which He had taken. When He spoke, it was literally God speaking; when He suffered, it was God suffering. Not that the Divine Nature itself could suffer, any more than our soul can see or hear; but, as the soul sees and hears through the organs of the body, so God the Son suffered *in* that human nature which He had taken to Himself and made His own. But in that nature did He truly suffer; as truly as He framed the worlds through His Almighty power, so through His human nature did He suffer; for when He came on earth, His manhood became as truly and intimately His, as His Almighty power had been from everlasting.

Think of this, all ye light-hearted, and consider whether with this thought you can read the last chapters of the four Gospels without fear and trembling.

For instance; "When He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so?" The words must be said, though I hardly dare say them,—that officer lifted up his hand against Almighty God. This is not a figurative way of speaking, or a rhetorical form of words, or a harsh, extreme, and unadvisable statement; it is a literal and simple truth, it is a great Catholic doctrine.

Again: "Then they did spit in His face, and buffeted Him, and others smote Him with the palms of their hands."

"The men that held Jesus mocked Him, and smote Him, and when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote Thee? and many other things blasphemously spake they against Him."

"And Herod with His men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate."

“ Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him ; and the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand, and they put on Him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews ! and they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and, bowing their knees, worshipped Him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe.”

Lastly : “ When they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him” *—between two malefactors, and even there they did not cease insulting and mocking Him ; but all of them, chief priests and people, stood beholding, and bidding Him come down from the Cross.

Now I bid you consider that that Face, so ruthlessly smitten, was the Face of God Himself ; the Brows bloody with the thorns, the sacred Body exposed to view and lacerated with the scourge, the Hands nailed to the Cross, and, afterwards, the Side pierced with the spear ; it was the Blood, and the Sacred Flesh, and the Hands, and the Temples, and the Side, and the Feet of God Himself which the frenzied multitude then gazed upon. This is so fearful a thought, that when the mind first masters it, surely it will be difficult to think of anything else ; so that, while we think of it, we must pray God to temper it to us, and to give us strength to think of it rightly, lest it be too much for us.

Taking into account, then, that Almighty God Himself, God the Son, was the Sufferer, we shall understand better than we have hitherto the description given of Him by the Evangelists ; we shall see the meaning of His general demeanour, His silence, and the words he used when He spoke, and Pilate’s awe at Him.

“ And the high priest arose and said unto Him, Answerest Thou nothing ? What is it which these witness against Thee ? But Jesus held His peace.” †

“ When He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee ? and He answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.” ‡

“ The Jews answered Him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou ? But Jesus gave Him no answer.” ||

* John xviii. 22. Matt. xxvi. 67. Luke xxii. 63—65 ; xxiii. 11. John xix. 1, 2. Matt. xxvii. 29. Mark xv. 19. Luke xxiii. 33.

† Matt xxvi. 62, 63.

‡ Matt. xxvii. 12—14.

|| John xix. 7—9.

“And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad : for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because He had heard many things of Him ; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing.”*

Lastly, His words to the women who followed Him, “ Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave such. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains Fall on us ; and to the hills, Cover us.”†

After these passages, consider the words of the beloved disciple in anticipation of His coming at the end of the world. “ Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, they also which pierced Him : and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”‡

Yes, we shall all of us, for weal or for wo, one day see that holy Countenance which wicked men struck and dishonoured ; we shall see those Hands that were nailed to the Cross ; that side which was pierced. We shall see all this ; and it will be the sight of the Living God.

This being the great mystery of Christ’s Cross and Passion, we might with reason suppose, as I have said, that some great thing would result from it. The sufferings and death of the Word Incarnate could not pass away like a dream ; they could not be a mere martyrdom, or a mere display or figure of something else, that they must have a virtue in them. This we might be sure of, though nothing had been told us about the result. But that result is also revealed ; it is this,—our reconciliation to God, the expiation of our sins, and our new creation in holiness.

We had need of a reconciliation, for by nature we are outcasts. From the time that Adam fell, all his children have been under a curse. “ In Adam all die,”|| as St. Paul says. So that every one of us is born into this world in a state of *death* ; such is our natural life from our very first breath ; we are children of wrath ; conceived in sin ; shapen in iniquity. We are under the bondage of an inborn element of evil, which thwarts and stifles whatever there is of truth and goodness remaining in us, directly we attempt to act according to it. This is that “ body of death ” under which St. Paul describes the natural man as groaning, and saying, “ O wretched man, who shall deliver me ! ” Now for ourselves, my brethren, we know (praised be God) that all of us have from our infancy been taken out of this miserable heathen state

* Luke xxiii. 8, 9. † Luke xxiii. 28—30. ‡ Rev. i. 7. || Cor. xv. 22.

by holy baptism, which is God's appointed means of regeneration. Still it is not less our natural state ; it is the state in which every one of us was born ; it is the state in which every little child is, when brought to the fount. Dear as he is to those who bring him thither, and innocent as he may look, there is, till he is baptized, an evil spirit in his heart, a spirit of evil lying hid, seen of God, unseen by man (as the serpent among the trees of Eden,) an evil spirit which from the first is hateful to God, and at length will be his eternal ruin. That evil spirit is cast out by Holy Baptism, without the privilege of which his birth would but be a misery to them. But whence did Baptism gain its power ? From that great event we are so soon to commemorate ; the death of the Son of God incarnate. Almost all religions have their outward cleansings ; they feel the need of man, though they cannot supply it. Even the Jewish system, though divine, effected nothing here ; its washings were but carnal ; the blood of bulls and goats was but earthly and unprofitable. Even St. John's baptism, our Lord's forerunner, had no inward propitiatory power. Christ was not yet crucified. But when that long-expected season came, when the Son of God had solemnly set Himself apart as a Victim in the presence of His twelve Apostles, and had gone into the garden, and before three of them had undergone His agony and bloody sweat, and then had been betrayed, buffeted, spit upon, scourged, and nailed to the cross, till He died, then He with His last breath said, "It is finished ;" and from that time the virtue of the Highest went forth through His wounds and with His blood, for the pardon and regeneration of man ; and hence it is that baptism has its power.

This is why He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "Christ hath redeemed us," says the Apostle elsewhere, "from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." Again, he says that Christ has "made peace by the blood of His cross." He has "reconciled" us "in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy and unblameable, and unreprouvable in His sight." Or, as St. John says, the "saints have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And no one speaks more explicitly on this great mystery than the prophet Isaiah, many hundred years before it was accomplished. "Surely He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to His own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.'"

* Gal. iii. 13. Col. i. 20—22. Rev. vii. 14. Isai. liii. 4—6.

We believe, then, that when Christ suffered on the cross, our nature suffered in Him. Human nature, fallen and corrupt, was under the wrath of God, and it was impossible that it should be restored to His favour till it had expiated its sin by suffering. Why this was necessary, we know not; but we are told expressly that we are "all by nature children of wrath," that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," and that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." The Son of God then took our nature on Him, that in Him it might do and suffer what in itself was impossible to it. What it could not effect of itself, it could effect in Him. He carried it about Him through a life of penance. He carried it forward to agony and death. In Him our sinful nature died and rose again. When it died in Him on the cross, that death was its new creation. In Him it satisfied its old and heavy debt; for the presence of His divinity gave it transcendent merit. His presence had kept it pure from sin from the first. His Hand had carefully selected the choicest specimen of our nature from the Virgin's substance; and, separating from it all defilement, His personal indwelling hallowed it and gave it power. And thus, when it had been offered up upon the cross, and made perfect by suffering, it became the first-fruits of a new man; it became a divine leaven of holiness for the new birth and spiritual life of as many as should receive it. And thus, as the Apostle says, "If one died for all, then did *all* die; "our old man is crucified *in Him*, that the *body* of sin might be destroyed;" and "together" with Christ "when we were dead in sins, hath He quickened us, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Thus "we are members of His body, from His flesh, and from His bones: for whosoever eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood, hath eternal life," for His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; and "he that eateth His flesh and drinketh His blood dwelleth in Him, and He in him."*

What a very different view of life do these doctrines present to us from that which the world takes! Only think of this one thing,—of the eagerness of the great mass of men after matters of time, after engagements of this world, after gain, after national aggrandizement, after speculations, which promise public or private advantage; and having thought of this, turn back to the contemplation of Christ's cross, and then say, as candid men, whether the world and all that is in the world is not as unbelieving now as when Christ came. Does there not seem too great cause to fear that this nation, in spite of its having been bap-

* 2 Cor. v. 14. Rom. vi. 6. Eph. ii. 5, 6. v. 30. John vi. 54.

tized into the Cross of Christ, is in so unholy a state, that, did Christ come among us as He came among the Jews, we should, except a small remnant, reject Him as well as they? May we not be sure that men now-a-days, had they been alive when He came, would have disbelieved and derided the holy and mysterious doctrines which He brought? Alas! is there any doubt at all that they would have fulfilled St. John's words,—“the darkness comprehended it not”? Their hearts are set on schemes of this world: there would have been no *sympathy* between them and the calm and heavenly mind of the Lord Jesus Christ. They would have said that His Gospel was strange, extravagant, incredible. The only reason they do not say so now is, that they are used to it, and do not really dwell on what they profess to believe. What! (it would have been said) the Son of God taking human flesh, impossible! the Son of God separate from God, yet one with Him! “how can these things be?” God Himself suffering on the Cross, the Almighty Everlasting God in the form of a servant, with human flesh and blood, wounded, insulted, dying! and all this as an Expiation for human sin! Why (they would ask) was an Expiation necessary? why could not the All-merciful Father pardon without one? why is human sin to be accounted so great an evil? We see no necessity for so marvellous a remedy; we refuse to admit a course of doctrine so utterly unlike anything which the face of this world tells us of. These are events without parallels; they belong to a new and a distinct order of things; and, while our heart has no sympathy with them, our reason utterly rejects them. And as for Christ's miracles, if they had not seen them, they would not have believed the report; if they had, they would have been ready enough to refer them to juggling craft; if not, as the Jews did, to Beelzebub.

Such will the holy truths of the Gospel ever appear to those who live to this world, whether they love its pleasures, its comforts, its prizes, or its struggles; their eyes are waxen gross, they cannot see Christ spiritually. When they see Him, there is no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. Thus they become unbelieving. In our Lord's words, “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*”* When He said this, the Pharisees *derided Him*. And He said unto them, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” God grant that we may not be of those who “justify

* Luke xvi. 13—15.

themselves before men," and "deride" those who preach the severe doctrine of the Cross! God grant that, if we have any misgivings about the corruptions and defects of the religion now so popular among us, we may have the grace forthwith to desire honestly to know God's will! God grant that we may not attempt to deceive our consciences, and *reconcile* together, by some artifice or other, the service of this world and of God! God grant that we may not pervert and dilute His holy Word, put upon it the false interpretations of men, reason ourselves out of its strictness, and reduce religion to an ordinary common-place matter,—instead of thinking it what it *is*, a mysterious and supernatural subject, as distinct from anything that lies on the surface of this world, as day is from night and heaven from earth!

SERMON VII.

THE CROSS OF CHRIST THE MEASURE OF THE WORLD.

JOHN xii. 32.

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.

A GREAT number of men live and die without reflecting at all upon this state of things in which they find themselves. They take things as they come, and follow their inclinations as far as they have the opportunity. They are guided mainly by pleasure and pain, not by reason, principle, or conscience; and they do not attempt to *interpret* this world, to determine what it means, or to reduce what they see and feel to system. But when persons, either from thoughtfulness of mind, or from intellectual activity, begin to contemplate the visible state of things into which they are born, then forthwith they find it a maze and a perplexity. It is a riddle which they cannot solve. It seems full of contradictions, and without a drift. Why it is, and what it is to issue in, and how it is what it is, and how we came to be introduced into it, and what is our destiny, are all mysteries.

In this difficulty, some have found one philosophy of life, and others another. Men have thought they had found the key, by means of which they might read what is so obscure. Ten thousand things come before us one after another in the course of life, and what are we to think of them? what colour are we to give them? Are we to look at all things in a gay and mirthful way? or in a melancholy way? in a desponding, or a hopeful way? Are we to make light of life altogether, or to treat the whole subject seriously? Are we to make greatest things of little consequence, or least things of great consequence? Are we to keep in mind what is past and gone, or are we to look on to the future, or are we to be absorbed in what is present? *How* are we to look at things? This is the question which all persons of observation ask themselves, and answer each in his own way. They wish to live by rule,—by something within them which may harmonize and adjust what is without them. Such is the need felt by reflective minds. Now, let me ask, what is the real key, what is the Christian interpretation of this world? What is given us by revelation to estimate and measure this world by? The event of this season,—the crucifixion of the Son of God.

It is the death of the Eternal Word of God, made flesh, which is our great lesson how to think and how to speak of this world. His Cross has put its due value upon everything which we see, upon all fortunes, all advantages, all ranks, all dignities, all pleasures; upon the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It has set a price upon the excitements, the rivalries, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the efforts, the triumphs of mortal man. It has given a meaning to the various, shifting course, the trials, the temptations, the sufferings, of his earthly state. It has brought together and made consistent all that seemed discordant and aimless. It has taught us how to live, how to use this world, what to expect, what to desire, what to hope. It is the tone into which all the strains of this world's music are ultimately to be resolved.

Look around, and see what the world presents of high and low. Go to the court of princes. See the treasure and skill of all nations brought together to honour a child of man. Observe the prostration of the many before the few. Consider the form and ceremonial, the pomp, the state, and circumstance, and the vain-glory. Do you wish to know the worth of it all? look at the Cross of Christ.

Go to the political world: see nation jealous of nation, trade rivaling trade, armies and fleets matched against each other. Survey the various ranks of the community, its parties and their contests, the strivings of the ambitious, the intrigues of the crafty. What is the

end of all this turmoil? the grave. What is the measure? the Cross.

Go, again, to the world of intellect and science : consider the wonderful discoveries which the human mind is making, the variety of arts to which its discoveries give rise, the all but miracles by which it shows its power ; and next, the pride and confidence of reason, and the absorbing devotion of thought to transitory objects, which is the consequence. Would you form a right judgment of all this ? look at the Cross.

Again : look at misery, look at poverty and destitution, look at oppression and captivity ; go where food is scanty, and lodging unhealthy. Consider pain and suffering, diseases long or violent, all that is frightful and revolting. Would you know how to rate all these ? gaze upon the Cross.

Thus in the Cross, and Him who hung upon it, all things meet ; all things subserve it, all things need it. It is their centre and their interpretation. For He was lifted up upon it, that He might draw all men and all things unto Him.

But it will be said, that the view which the Cross of Christ imparts to us of human life and of the world, is not that which we should take, if left to ourselves ; that it is not an obvious view ; that if we look at things on their surface, they are far more bright and sunny than they appear when viewed in the light which this season casts upon them. The world seems made for the enjoyment of just such a being as man, and man is put into it. He has the *capacity* of enjoyment, and the world supplies the *means*. How natural this, what a simple as well as pleasant philosophy, yet how different from that of the Cross ! The doctrine of the Cross, it may be said, disarranges two parts of a system which seem made for each other ; it severs the fruit from the eater, the enjoyment from the enjoyer. How does this solve a problem ? does it not rather itself create one ? I answer, first, that whatever force this objection may have, surely it is merely a repetition of that which Eve felt and Satan had infused, in Eden ; for did not the woman see that the forbidden tree was “good for food,” and “a tree to be *desired* ?” Well, then, is it wonderful that we too, the descendants of the first pair, should still be in a world where there is a forbidden fruit, and that our trial should lie in possessing it, and our happiness in abstaining from it ? The world, at first sight, appears *made* for pleasure, and the vision of Christ’s Cross is a solemn and sorrowful sight interfering with this appearance. Be it so ; but why may it not be our duty to abstain from enjoyment notwithstanding, if it was a duty even in Eden !

But again : it is but a superficial view of things to say that this life

is made for pleasure and happiness. To those who look under the surface, it tells a very different tale. The doctrine of the Cross does but teach, only infinitely more forcibly, still after all it does but teach the very same lesson which this world teaches to those who live long in it who have much experience in it, who know it. The world is sweet to the lips, but bitter to the taste. It pleases at first, but not at last. It looks gay on the outside, but evil and misery lie concealed within. When a man has passed a certain number of years in it, he cries out with the preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Nay, if he has not religion for his guide, he will be forced to go further, and say, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit;" all is disappointment; all is sorrow; all is pain. The sore judgments of God upon sin are concealed within it, and force a man to grieve whether he will or no. Therefore the doctrine of the Cross of Christ does but anticipate for us our experience of the world. It is true, it bids us grieve for our sins in the midst of all that smiles and glitters around us; but if we will not heed it, we shall at length be forced to grieve for them from undergoing their fearful punishment. If we will not acknowledge that this world has been made miserable by sin from the sight of Him on whom our sins were laid, we shall experience it to be miserable by the recoil of those sins upon ourselves.

It may be granted, then, that the doctrine of the Cross is not on the surface of the world. The surface of things is bright only, and the Cross is sorrowful; it is a hidden doctrine; it lies under a veil; it at first sight startles persons, and they are tempted to revolt from it. Like St. Peter, they cry out, "Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee."* And yet it is a true doctrine; for Truth is not on the surface of things, but in the depths.

And as the doctrine of the Cross, though it be the true interpretation of this world, is not prominently manifested in it, upon its surface but is concealed: so again when received into the faithful heart, there it abides as a living principle, but deep, and hidden from observation. Religious men, in the words of Scripture, "live by faith in the Son of God, who loved them and gave Himself for them;"† but they do not tell this to all men; they leave all others to find it out as they may. Our Lord's own command to His disciples was, that, when they fast they should "anoint their head and wash their face."‡ Thus they are bound not to make a display, but ever to be content to look outwardly different from what they are really inwardly. They are to carry a cheerful countenance with them, and to control and regulate their feelings, that those feelings, by not being expended on the surface, may

* Matt. xvi. 22.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ Matt. vi. 17.

retire deep into their hearts and there live. And thus "Jesus Christ and He crucified" is, as the Apostle tells us, "a hidden wisdom;"—hidden in the world, which seems at first sight to speak a far other doctrine,—and hidden in the faithful soul, which to persons at a distance, or to chance beholders, seems to be living but an ordinary life, while really it is in secret holding communion with Him who was "manifested in the flesh," "crucified through weakness," "justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, and received up into glory."

This being the case, the great and awful doctrine of the Cross of Christ, which we now commemorate, may fitly be called, in the language of figure, the *heart* of religion. The heart may be considered as the seat of life; it is the principle of motion, heat, and activity; from it the blood goes to and fro to the extreme parts of the body. It sustains the man in his powers and faculties; it enables the brain to think; and when it is touched, man dies. And in like manner the sacred doctrine of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice is the vital principle on which the Christian lives, and without which Christianity is not. Without it no other doctrine is held profitably; to believe in Christ's divinity, or in His manhood, or in the Holy Trinity or in a judgment to come, or in the resurrection of the dead, is an untrue belief, not Christian faith, unless we receive also the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice. On the other hand, to receive it presupposes the reception of other high truths of the Gospel besides; it involves the belief in Christ's true divinity, in His true incarnation, and in man's sinful state by nature; and it prepares the way to belief in the sacred Eucharistic feast, in which He who was once crucified is ever given to our souls and bodies, verily and indeed, in His Body and in His Blood. But again, the heart is hidden from view; it is carefully and securely guarded; it is not like the eye set in the forehead, commanding all, and seen of all: and so in like manner the sacred doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice is not one to be talked of, but to be lived upon; not to be put forth boldly, but to be adored privately; not to be used as a first principle in the conversion of the ungodly, or for the satisfaction of reasoners of this world, but to be unfolded to the docile and obedient; to young children, whom the world has not corrupted; to the sorrowful, who need comfort; to the sincere and earnest, who need a rule of life; to the innocent, who need warning; and to the established, who have earned the knowledge of it.

One more remark I shall make, and then conclude. It must not be supposed, because the doctrine of the Cross makes us sad, that therefore the Gospel is a sad religion. The Psalmist says, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy;" and our Lord says, "They that mourn shall

be comforted." Let no one go away with the impression that the Gospel makes us take a gloomy view of the world and of life. It hinders us indeed from taking a superficial view, and finding a vain transitory joy in what we see ; but it forbids our immediate enjoyment, only to grant it in truth and fulness afterwards. It only forbids us to *begin* with enjoyment. It only says, if you begin with pleasure, you will end with pain. It bids us begin with the Cross of Christ, and in that Cross we shall at first find sorrow, but in a while peace and comfort will rise out of that sorrow. That Cross will lead us to mourning, repentance, humiliation, prayer, fasting ; we shall sorrow for our sins, we shall sorrow with Christ's sufferings ; but all this will but issue, nay, will be accompanied with a happiness far greater than the enjoyment which the world gives,—though careless worldly minds will not believe such a doctrine, ridicule the notion of it, because they never have tasted it, and think it a mere matter of words which religious persons feel it decent and proper to use, and to try to believe themselves, and to get others to believe, but which no one really feels. This is what they think ; but our Saviour said to His disciples, "Ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." . . . "Peace I leave with you ; My peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you." And St. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."* And thus the doctrine of the Cross, as containing in it the view of Christ's redemption, as well as of Christ's sufferings, wounds us indeed, but so wounds as to heal also.

And thus, too, all that is bright and beautiful, even in the surface of this world, though it has no substance, and may not suitably be enjoyed for its own sake, yet is a figure and promise of that true joy which issues out of the Atonement. It is a promise beforehand of what is to be : it is a shadow, raising hope because the substance is to follow, but not to be rashly taken instead of the substance. And it is God's usual mode of dealing with us, in mercy to send the shadow before the substance, that we may take comfort in what is to be, before it comes. Thus our Lord before His passion rode into Jerusalem in triumph, with the multitudes crying Hosanna, and strewing His road with palm branches and their garments. This was but a vain and hollow pageant,

* John xvi. 22. xiv. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 14.

nor did our Lord take pleasure in it. It was a shadow which stayed not, but flitted away. It could not be more than a shadow, for the passion had not been undergone by which His true triumph was wrought out. He could not enter into His glory before He had first suffered. He could not take pleasure in this semblance of it, knowing that it was unreal. Yet that first shadowy triumph was the omen and prelude of the true victory to come, when He had overcome the sharpness of death. And we commemorate this figurative triumph on the last Sunday in Lent, to cheer us in the sorrow of the week that follows, and to remind us of the true joy which comes with Easter-Day.

And so, too, as regards this world, with all its enjoyments, yet its disappointments. Let us not trust it; let us not give our hearts to it; let us not begin with it. Let us begin with faith; let us begin with Christ; let us begin with His Cross and the humiliation to which it leads. Let us first be drawn to Him who is lifted up, that so He may, with Himself, freely give us all things. Let us "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and then all those things of this world "will be added to us." They alone are able to enjoy this world, who begin with the world unseen. They alone enjoy it, who have first abstained from it. They alone can truly feast, who have first fasted; they alone are able to use the world, who have learned not to abuse it; they only inherit it, who take it as a shadow of the world to come, and who for that world to come relinquish it.

SERMON VIII.

DIFFICULTY OF REALIZING SACRED PRIVILEGES.

PSALM cxviii. 24.

This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

It is always very difficult to realize any great joy or great sorrow. We cannot realize it by wishing to do so. What brings joys and sorrows of this world home to us, is their circumstances and accompaniments. When a friend dies, we cannot believe him taken from us at first;—we cannot believe ourselves to be in any new place when we are just come

to it. When we are told a thing, we assent to it, we do not doubt it, but we do not feel it to be true, we do not understand it as a fact which must take up a position or station in our thoughts, and must be acted from and acted towards, must be dealt with *as* existing : that is, we do not realize it. This seems partly the reason why, when Almighty God reveals himself in Scripture to this man or that, he, on the other hand, asks for some sign whereby he shall know that God has spoken. Doubtless sinful infirmity sometimes mixed itself up in such questions, as in the case of Zacharias, who being a priest in the Temple, the very dwelling-place of the Living God, where, if any where, Angels were present, where, if any where, God would speak, ought to have needed nothing whereby to realize to himself God's power, God's superintending eye, God's faithfulness towards the house of Israel and its priests. Under the same feeling, though blamelessly, Gideon asked for the miracle upon the fleece. He could not bring himself to believe that *he* was to be what God's Angel had declared. What ? *he*, the least of his father's house, and his family poor in Manasseh, how could he understand that *he* was to be the great champion of Israel against the Midianites ? Not that he doubted it, for God had said it ; but he could not feel, think, speak, act as if it were true. If he attempted to do so, it was in an unreal way, and he spoke and acted unnaturally and on a theory, on a view of things which he had mastered one minute and which was gone the next. The special favour of God towards him, according to the words, " The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour ! " * seemed like a dream and confused him. So he said, " If now so it be, certain consequences flow from it ; if God is with me, it is the God of miracles who is with me, who can change the creature as He will ; may He then vouchsafe to do so ! that I may have the full impression on my soul, heart, and mind, of what my reason receives ; that I may be familiarized to this strange and overpowering Providence, that I should be raised above my brethren, and made God's minister to them for good." And therefore he asked, first, that the fleece might be wet, then that it might be dry ; not as evidence whereon to build his faith, but as a manifestation impressing his imagination and heart.

In somewhat the same way we are told of Jacob also ; " when he saw the waggons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived." † Jacob, to be sure, did doubt what his sons reported from distrust of them ; yet the mere sight of the waggons did not serve to prove their veracity near so much as to quiet his perplexed

* Judges vi. 12

† Gen. xlv. 27.

imagination, and to reconcile it to the sudden news. That news was more startling than the reporters were untrustworthy.

And thus we Christians, though born in our very infancy into the kingdom of God, and chosen above all other men to be heirs of heaven and witnesses to the world, and though knowing and believing this truth entirely, yet have very great difficulty and pass many years in learning it. Not any one, of course, fully understands it;—doubtless; but we have not even a fair, practical hold of it. And here we are, even on this great Day, this Day of days, on which Christ arose from the dead,—here are we, on this very Day, as infants, lying helpless and senseless on the ground, without eyes to see or heart to comprehend who we are.

Surely so it is: and it cannot be denied that we have much to do, very much, before we rise to the understanding of our new nature and its privileges, and learn to rejoice and be glad in the Day which the Lord hath made; “the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, that we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.”* Such high words as these are, alas! scarcely more than mere words when spoken to us; at best, we but believe them, we do not in any good measure realize them.

Now this insensibility or want of apprehension rises in great measure, it is scarcely necessary to say, from our exceeding frailness and sinfulness. Our old nature is continually exerting itself against the new; “the flesh lusteth against the spirit.”† Its desire is towards this world. This world is its food; its eyes apprehend this world. Because it is what it is, it allies itself to this world. The world and the flesh form a compact with each other; the one asks, and the other supplies. Therefore in proportion as it seduces us into this world’s company, of course, in an equal degree, it blunts our perception of that world which we do not see; it prevents our realizing it. And thus one special cause of our difficulty in realizing our election into the kingdom of heaven is our evil nature, which familiarizes us with this world, Satan’s kingdom, and weighs on us and pulls us down when we would lift up our hearts, lift them up unto the Lord. This is certain: yet, besides this, there are certainly other reasons too which make it difficult for us to apprehend our state, and cause us to do so but gradually; and which are not our fault, but which arise out of our position and circumstances.

* Eph. i. 18—20.

† Gal. v. 17.

We are almost born into the fulness of Christian blessings, long before we have reason. We could not apprehend them at all, and that without our own fault, when we were baptized; for we were infants. As, then, we acquire reason itself but gradually, so we acquire the knowledge of what we are but gradually also; and as it is no fault in us, but a blessing to us, that we were baptized so early, so, from the nature of the case, and not from any fault of ours, do we but slowly enter into the privileges of our baptism. So it is as regards all our knowledge of ourselves and of our position in the world; we but gradually gain it. At first children do not know that they are responsible beings; but by degrees they not only feel that they are, but reflect on the great truth, and what it implies. Some persons recollect a time as children when it fell on them to reflect what they were, whence they came, whither they tended, why they lived, what was required of them. The thought fell upon them long after they had heard and spoken of God; but at length they began to realize what they had heard, and they began to muse about themselves. So, too, it is in matters of this world. As our minds open, we gradually understand where we are in human society. We have a notion of ranks and classes, of nations, of countries. We begin to see how we stand relatively to others. Thus a man differs from a boy; he has a general view of things; he sees their bearings on each other; he sees his own position, sees what is becoming, what is expected of him, what his duty is in the community, what his rights. He understands his place in the world, and, in a word, he is at home in it.

Alas, that while we thus grow in knowledge in matters of time and sense, yet we remain children in knowledge of our heavenly privileges! St. Paul says, that whereas Christ is risen, He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* This is what we have still to learn; to know our place, position, situation as "children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." We are risen again, and we know it not. We begin our catechism by confessing that we are so, but it takes a long life to apprehend what we confess. We are like people waking from sleep, who cannot collect their thoughts at once, or understand where they are. By little and little the truth breaks upon us. Such are we in the present world; sons of light, gradually waking to a knowledge of themselves. For this let us meditate, let us pray, let us work,—gradually to attain to a real apprehension what we are. Thus, as time goes on, we shall gain first one thing, then another. By little and little

* Eph. ii. 6.

we shall give up shadows and find the substance. Waiting on God day by day, we shall make progress day by day, and approach to the true and clear view of what in Christ He has made us to be. Year by year we shall gain something, and each Easter, as it comes, will enable us to rejoice more with heart and understanding in that great salvation which Christ then accomplished. This we shall find to be one great providential benefit arising from those duties which He exacts of us. Our duties to God and man are not only duties done to Him, but they are means of enlightening our eyes and making our faith apprehensive. Every act of obedience has a tendency to strengthen our convictions about heaven. Every sacrifice makes us more zealous; every self-denial makes us more devoted. This is a use, too, of the observance of sacred seasons; they wean us from this world, they impress upon us the reality of the world which we see not. We trust, if we thus proceed, we shall understand more and more where we are. We humbly trust that, as we cleanse ourselves from this world, our eyes will be enlightened to see the things which are only spiritually discerned. We hope that to us will be fulfilled in due measure the words of the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God."* We have good hope, which cannot deceive us, that if we wait upon God, as the Saints have ever waited, with fastings and prayers; if we seek Him as Anna sought Him, or St. Peter at Joppa, or holy Daniel before them, Christ will be manifested to us; the day will dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts. We shall see the sign of the Son of man in heaven; we shall eat of the hidden manna, and possess that secret of the Lord which is with those that fear Him; and like St. Paul we shall "know whom we have believed, and be persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day."†

While then we feel full keenly, as we ought, that we do not honour this Blessed Day with that lively and earnest joy which is its due, yet let us not be discouraged, let us not despond at this. We *do* feel joy; we feel more joy than we know we do. We see more of the next world than we know we see. If we have duly improved the sacred season which is now past; if we have in good earnest, and without trifling with ourselves, denied ourselves in meat and drink, and other indulgences, according to our strength; if we have been frequent in prayers according to our opportunities; it cannot be but that a blessing has come upon us, and is upon us now. We may not be sensible of it, but by and by we shall know it, when we look back upon it. What has already happened in our past experience surely is enough to assure us of this. We

* Matt. v. 8.

† 2 Tim. i. 12.

know how we have been brought hitherto to recognise so much as we do recognise of our Christian blessedness ; how very gradually, how silently. We may recollect, perhaps, one or other striking occurrence. Perhaps, as I have said, we can put our hand, as it were, on a time in our childhood, when the thought first came on us that we had relations towards other beings, and they towards us, and we marvelled what we were, and why we existed. Perhaps, in after life, we recollect seasons when the force of divine truth came on us more sensibly and distinctly ; but for the most part it is not so. For the most part we have gained truth, and made progress from truth to truth, without knowing it. We cannot tell when we first held this, or first that doctrine, which is now our joy and treasure. It is "as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how . . . first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."* One may see this on all sides ; one may see it especially at this time. God Almighty seems at this time to be mercifully leading numbers on to the full truth, as it is in Jesus (if it be not presumptuous thus to speak) ; He is leading them on, and they do not know it themselves. They are gradually modifying and changing their opinions, while they think they remain stationary. Others, perhaps, see how it is with them : they do not ; in due time they will. Such is God's wonderful way. Jacob was at Bethel before he knew it. We, too, are both in the kingdom of grace without knowing it, and we learn to discern it before we are sensible we discern it. As infants gaze around them, and yet seem to look at nothing, we too see our privileges, yet do not master them. Let us pray ever, that we may know more and more what we are, and that we may duly apprehend our own knowledge ; in a word, that we may have right feelings, and a corresponding creed.

And now, to conclude, for it is hardly befitting on this Day to speak much, when God has done His greatest work. Let us think of it and of Him. Let us rejoice in the Day which He has made, and let us be "willing in the Day of His Power." This is Easter Day. Let us say this again and again to ourselves with fear and great joy. As children say to themselves, "This is the spring," or "This is the sea," trying to grasp the thought, and not let it go ; as travellers in a foreign land say, "This is that great city," or "This is that famous building," knowing it has a long history through centuries, and vexed with themselves that they know so little about it ; so let us say, this is the Day of Days, the Royal Day, the Lord's Day. This is the Day on which

* Mark iv. 26—28.

Christ arose from the dead ; the Day which brought us salvation. It is a Day which has made us greater than we know. It is our Day of rest, the true Sabbath. Christ entered into His rest, and so do we. It brings us, in figure, through the grave and gate of death to our season of refreshment in Abraham's bosom. We have had enough of weariness, and dreariness, and listlessness, and sorrow, and remorse. We have had enough of this troublesome world. We have had enough of its noise and din. Noise is its best music. But now there is stillness ; and it is a stillness that speaks. We know how strange the feeling is of perfect silence after continued sound. Such is our blessedness now. Calm and serene days have begun ; and Christ is heard in them, and His still small voice, because the world speaks not. Let us but put off the world, and we put on Christ. The receding from one is an approach to the other. We have now for some weeks been trying, through His grace, to unclothe ourselves of earthly wants and desires. May that unclothing be unto us a clothing upon of things invisible and imperishable ! May we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, season after season, year after year, till He takes to Himself, first one, then another, in the order He thinks fit, to be separated from each other for a little while, to be united together for ever, in the kingdom of His Father and our Father, His God and our God.

S E R M O N I X .

THE GOSPEL SIGN ADDRESSED TO FAITH.

MATTHEW xii. 38.

Then certain of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a Sign from Thee.

THESE Scribes and Pharisees, though Christ had wrought among them "works which none other man did," and, as one of their own company confessed, no man could do miracles such as His "except God were with him," persisted in asking for some decisive Sign, which would prove His divinity beyond all question. In His reply, our Lord denied and

yet promised such a sign. He says, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; there shall no sign be given to it, but the Sign of the Prophet Jonas." In this sentence it is implied, both that their wishes were not to be granted, yet that a great miracle was to be wrought.

On a second occasion they asked again, Sadducees as well as Pharisees: they came, and tempting, desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven." Joshua had stopped the sun and moon "in the sight of Israel;" Samuel had brought thunder at harvest time; they asked for a similar miracle. They asked for a sign from heaven; He answered still by promising a Sign from the earth,—a sign like his, who was "three days and three nights in the whale's belly." A Sign was to be wrought and was to disappoint them: it was to be a Sign, but not to them; hence our Lord says in the parallel passage in St. Mark, "Verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given to this generation."*

In an earlier part of His ministry, the same question had been asked, and the same answer given under a different image. The Jews "said unto Him, what sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" He in like manner answers; "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."† They misunderstood Him, and He did not set them right. For they were to see, and see not; they were not to witness the Sign then, nor were they allowed to apprehend His language now. He spoke of the resurrection of His body, and they were not at that season to see Him whom they had pierced.

Now what is remarkable in this passage is this, that our Lord promised a great sign parallel to those wrought by the old prophets; yet, instead of being public, as theirs was, it was in the event, like Jonah's, a secret sign. Few saw it; it was to be received by all, but on faith; it was addressed to the humble and lowly. When it took place, and St. Thomas refused to believe without sight, our Lord said to him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The Apostle, perhaps, might have been arguing, "If this be the Lord's great Sign, surely it is to be seen. What is meant by the resurrection but an evidence which is to be addressed to my senses? I have to believe, and this is to assure my belief." Yet St. Thomas would have been more blessed, had he believed Christ's miraculous Presence without seeing it; and our Lord implied that such persons there would be.

Now what makes this a subject of interest to us is, that our Lord

* Matt. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 12.

† John i. 19.

does expressly promise all Christians a certain gracious manifestation of Himself, which it is natural, at first sight, to suppose a sensible one : and many persons understand it to be such, as if it were not more blessed to believe than to see. Our Lord says ; “ He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me ; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.” When Jude asked Him, “ Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?” our Lord answered, “ If a man love Me, he will keep My words ; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”* In accordance with this promise, St. Paul says, “ The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God ;” and St. John, “ He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.”

Now, that this great gift, whatever it be, is of a nature to impart illumination, sanctity, and peace, to the soul to which it comes, far from disputing, I would earnestly maintain. And, in this indirect way, doubtless, it is in a certain sense apprehended and perceived ; perceived in its effects, with a consciousness that those effects cannot come of themselves, but imply a gift from which they come, and a presence of which they are, as it were, the shadow, a voice of which they are the echo. But there are persons who desire the inward manifestation of Christ to be much more sensible than this. They will not be contented without some sensible sign and direct evidence that God loves them ; some assurance, in which faith has no part, that God has chosen them ; and which may answer to their anticipations of what Scripture calls “ the secret of the Lord,” “ and that hidden manna” which Christ invites us to partake. Some men, for instance, hold that their conscience would have no peace, unless they recollected the time when they were converted from darkness to light, from a state of wrath to the kingdom of God. Others consider, that in order to have the seal of election in them, they must be able to discern in themselves certain feelings or frames of mind, a renunciation of their own merit, and an apprehension of gospel salvation ; as if were not enough to renounce ourselves and follow Christ, without the lively consciousness that we are doing so ; and that in this lies “ the secret of the Lord.” Others go further ; and think that without a distinct inward assurance of his salvation, a man is not in a saving state. This is what men often conceive ; not considering that whatever be the manifestation promised to Christians by our Lord, it is not likely to be more sensible and more intelligible than the great sign of His own Resurrection. Yet

* John xiv. 21—23.

even that, like the miracle wrought upon Jonah, was in secret, and they who believed without seeing it were more blessed than those who saw.

All this accords with what is told us about particular divine manifestations in other parts of Scripture. The saints reflected on them afterwards, and mastered them, but can hardly be considered as sensible of them at the very time. Thus Jacob, after the vision, says; "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." Manoah said to his wife, after the Angel had departed, "We shall surely die because we have seen God." Gideon in like circumstances said, "Alas, O Lord God, for because I have seen an Angel of the Lord face to face." And St. Peter, while the Angel was delivering him out of prison, though he obeyed him, yet "wist not that it was true which was done by the Angel, but thought he saw a vision;" but "when he was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent His Angel."*

Let no one think it strange to say, that God may be holding communion with us without our knowing it. Do not all good thoughts come from Him? Yet are we sensible that they so come? Can we tell how they come? We commonly speak of being influenced by God's grace, and resisting His grace; this implies a certain intercourse between the soul and God; yet who will say that he himself can tell in particular instances when God moves him, and when he is responding this way or that? It is one thing, then, to receive impressions, another to reflect upon them and be conscious of them. God may manifest Himself to us, and that to the increase of our comfort, yet we do not realize that He does so.

But now to proceed; for there is more information given us on the subject. There was another occasion on which the Jews asked for a sign, and on which our Lord answered by promising one, not to His Apostles only, but in continuance, like the manifestation He speaks of, to all His faithful followers. And it was a sign not more sensible or palpable, not less the object of faith as regards the many, than that sign of His resurrection which He gave once for all. He had just before been feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two small fishes; when, not contented with this, the Jews said, "What sign showest Thou that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou *work*?" and they proceeded to refer to the "sign from heaven," which Moses had given them. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat." It was a little

* Gen. xxviii. 16. Judges xiii. 22; vi. 22. Acts xii. 9—11.

thing, they seemed to say, to multiply bread, but it was a great thing to send down bread from heaven,—a great thing, when the nature of the creature was changed, and men were made to live by the word of the Lord. Was the Son of man able to give them bread such as this? Yes, surely, He had a Sign,—a Sign from heaven, more wonderful, a fearful Sign, surpassing thought and surpassing sight too, addressed to faith only, but not the less true because it was hidden. Moses gave their fathers bread from heaven; they saw it, ate it, and were dead; His Sign was greater. He was Himself the Bread from heaven under the Gospel, and the Bread of life. He took not of the creature to satisfy their need, but He gave Himself for the life of the world. “Moses gave you not that Bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven, for the Bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. I am the Bread of Life. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.” Now I am not led to speak here of that special ordinance in which His divine announcement is fulfilled; this would be foreign to my purpose. I do but wish to consider the gift in itself, and the sign in itself, as these words describe it. It is a sign greater than manna, yet beyond dispute, as the passage itself shows, a sign not addressed to sight, but to faith. For our Lord speaks of our “coming to Him,” and “believing on Him;” and He says that “it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;” and He warns us, “No one can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him.” His coming up from the heart of the earth was a sign for faith, not for sight; and such is His coming down from heaven as Bread.

I have been speaking of the signs which He Himself promised; but others were announced concerning Him by His servants, and these, let it be observed, are secret also, and addressed to faith. The Prophet Isaiah was commissioned to promise Ahaz a sign; “Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God,” he says, “ask it either in the depth or in the height above.” When Ahas would not speak, the Prophet proceeded: “The Lord Himself shall give you a sign; behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel.”* Yet could there be a Sign more secret, less exposed to the senses, less addressed to the reason, than the Conception? It was a miracle, yet not an evidence.

And so again, when our Lord was born, the Angel gave the shepherds a sign; but which was the greater evidence, the Angel himself, and the multitude of the heavenly host, or the Sign itself which he sent them

* Isaiah vii. 11. 14.

to see? "This shall be a sign unto you," he said, "Ye shall see the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Was this an evidence of greatness or of meanness? Did it prove Him to be God, or was it a trial of faith?

And so again, though it is not called a sign, yet it had been published in the manner of a sign, that the Lord should suddenly come to His Temple, even the "Messenger of the covenant," that "the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former," and that God would glorify the house of His glory. But how did he come to fulfil these prophecies? As an infant in arms, recognised by one or two holy persons, and that by means of faith, without pomp, or display of greatness. Simeon held in his hands the immaculate form of the Saviour of men, the light and life of the world, the all-holy and incorruptible Presence which the Angels of God worship; yet in what an outward appearance! Yet still he said, undoubtingly, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

What is true in these instances, is true of all the parts of our Lord's gracious economy. He was "manifested in the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of Angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world; received up into glory;" yet what was the nature of the manifestation? The Annunciation was secret; the Nativity was secret; the miraculous fasting in the wilderness was secret; the Resurrection secret; the Ascension not far from secret; the abiding Presence secret. One thing alone was public, and in the eyes of the world,—His death; the only event which did not speak of His divinity, the only event in which He seemed a sign, not of power, but of weakness. He was crucified in weakness, but He was not crucified in secret. His Humiliation was proclaimed and manifested all over the earth. When lifted up indeed from the earth, He displayed His power; He drew] all men to Him, but not from what was seen, but from what was hidden, from what was not known, from what was matter of faith, from His atoning virtue. He was, as far as seen, in holy Simeon's words, "a Sign which should be spoken against." It is not by reason or by sight that we accept and glory in the sign of the Cross; it is by "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, and "as newborn babes desiring the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby." "If so be," as St. Peter proceeds, "ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious; to whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to

God by Jesus Christ. Unto you, therefore, *that believe*, He is precious ; but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.*

Let us not seek then for signs and wonders, or ask for sensible inward tokens of God's favour ; let us not indulge enthusiasm, or become the slaves of superstition, who are children of God by faith. Faith only can introduce us to the unseen Presence of God ; let us venture to believe, let us make trial before we see, and the evidence which others demand before believing, we shall gain more abundantly by believing. Almighty God is hidden from us ; the world does not discover Him to us ; we may go to the right hand and the left, but we find Him not. The utmost we can do in the way of nature is to feel after Him, who, though we see Him not, yet is not far from every one of us. "Lo He goeth by me," says Job, "and I see him not ; He passeth on also, and I perceive Him not." "O that I knew where I might find Him ! that I might come even to his seat. . . . Behold, I go forward, and He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him. On the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him ; He hideth himself on the the right hand, that I cannot see Him."† This is the veil that is cast over all nations ; the want of intercourse or communion between the soul and Him who made it. We can speak to His creatures, we cannot speak to Him. Once it was not so ; man was created upright, and then he saw God ; he fell, and lost God's image and God's presence. How must he regain his privilege, but by becoming what he once was ? He lost it by sinning, he must regain it by pureness. And till this recovery he must accept it on faith ; he is allowed to apprehend and enjoy it by faith. He begins with faith, that he may end with holiness ; he is allowed to begin with faith, because faith is itself of a holy nature, and the first fruits and earnest of holiness to come. Faith is the religion of sinners beginning to purify themselves for God, and in every age, and under every dispensation, the just have lived by faith. "By faith" Moses "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible ;" for lack of faith Balaam met an Angel in the way and discerned him not. Thus "we walk by faith, not by sight ;" we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." We set Him on our right hand, "whom having not seen, we love : in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Opposed to this generous and vigorous faith is carnal blindness and grossness of heart, of which Scripture speaks so often. Whatever there

* 1 Pet. ii. 1—7.

† Job ix. 11 ; xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

is of spiritual light within us, is quenched by indulging our natural tastes and appetites. Our Lord says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon ;" He bids us watch and pray, and beware of eating and drinking, buying and selling, marrying and being given in marriage. We cannot have our eyes at once on this world and on the other. Those who live in the sun's glare, can see nothing in twilight ; but those whose eyes are used to the shade, see many things which the others will not believe they see. So is it with our souls ; the minding of the flesh, aiming at this world's goods, seeking to rise or succeed in life, gazing on greatness, rank, distinction, abundance, pomp and show, coveting wealth, measuring things by wealth, eating and drinking without restraint, placing no curb upon the passions, exercising no self-command, living not by rule, indolently and weakly following the first idea which presents itself, the first impulse, the first temptation, all this makes the heart irreligious. Then it is that men ask for clearer evidence, and reject the truth ; then they say, " How can these things be ?" or " This is a hard saying : " or " What sign showest Thou ?" for " the heart of this people," in the prophet's words, " is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed ; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." When He healed men in the days of His flesh, it was indeed by means of His own sacred person, His touch, or His breath, or His voice ; but still faith was the condition on the part of the suplicants ; and now too, though He is with us ever so really and fully according to His promise, yet He requires faith, as before, in order to our restoration to His favour and to His image.

What a contrast to such thoughts as these is the conduct of the mass of men. Truly they are " without God in the world,"—that is, they do not keep before their minds, in any sense, that He is present, though unseen ; they do not even admit that they ought to do so, or try to do so, or approach even to the idea that there are persons who do live as in the sight of the Invisible. Go into the general concourse of men, and what notion is there entertained of such a dependence upon, such an intercourse with, things unseen, as Scripture prescribes ? They are engaged in their several trades and professions ; they are active, companionable, and friendly ; they are unexceptionable as far as the civilities and kindnesses of mutual intercourse are concerned ; but what are they more ? Have they seriousness ? Are they under the habitual influence of religion ? Do they sacrifice this life to the next ? Is there any thing which they do or do not, which they would not do, or would not omit to do, were religion a mere idle tale ? Is God in any

one of their thoughts? Do they fear Him? Do they recollect that they are to be judged? What "marks" have they "of the Lord Jesus?" How show they that they are waiting for Him who has gone away only to come back again? What an awful sight does the baptized world present to any one who retires some few steps out of it! O fearful thought, a day will come when every eye shall see Him bodily, whom they will not learn now to see spiritually! O fearful thought indeed, when all these indolent and careless men, to say nothing of open scoffers and profligates, will be gathered together before His judgment-seat, to receive their doom once for all! At present they look upon religion as a dream, and religious men as dreamers; they only think of them as narrow-minded men, or superstitiously strict, or weak, or fanciful, or hypocrites, or fanatical, or party spirited; as persons who profess much, but are, after all, much the same as other men, governed by the same weaknesses, passions, and inducements. O miserable and most dreadful day of His coming, and who shall abide it? when those who will not acknowledge the secret glory, shall at length feel the manifested power of the Lamb; when those who will not discern His tokens now, but think His ordinances, His Church, His servants, to be but things of this world, will then see "the Sign of the Son of man in heaven," and against their will must believe and tremble. For "then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Let us be wise in time; let us seek Him "while it is called to-day;" let us "seek the Lord and His strength, seek His face evermore." Let us seek Him in His Temple, and in its ordinances; especially in that most sacred Ordinance in which He all but reveals to us His heavenly countenance, all but gives us to touch His hands and feet, and put our hand into His side, that we may see that it is He Himself, and that we follow no deceitful vision. He said to Mary, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." He is now ascended, therefore we may touch Him. Let us, as far as is permitted us, approach Him, who walked upon the sea, and rebuked the wind, and multiplied the loaves, and turned the water into wine, and made the clay give sight, and entered through the closed doors, and came and vanished at His will. Let us see Him by faith, though our eyes are holden, that we know it not. Evermore may He so be with us, a gracious Lord, whose "garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia," of "spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all the trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, and all the chief spices."* So may He be with us evermore, moving our hearts within us, "until the day break and the shadows flee away."

* Ps. xlv. 8. Cant. iv. 14.

S E R M O N X .

THE SPIRITUAL PRESENCE OF CHRIST IN THE CHURCH.

JOHN xvi. 16.

A little while and ye shall not see Me, and again a little while and ye shall see Me,
because I go to the Father.

VERY opposite lessons are taught us in different parts of Scripture from the doctrine of Christ's leaving the world and returning to His Father; lessons so opposite the one to the other, that at first sight, a reader might even find a difficulty in reconciling them together. In an earlier season of His ministry, our Lord intimates that when He was removed, His disciples should sorrow,—that then was to be the special time for humiliation. “Can the children of the Bride-chamber mourn,” He asks, “as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and *then* shall they fast.”* Yet in the words following the text, spoken by Him when He was going away, He says; “I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.” And He says shortly before it, “It is expedient for you that I go away.” And again: “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more: but ye see Me.” Thus Christ's going to the Father is at once a source of sorrow, because it involves His absence, and of joy because it involves His presence. And out of the doctrine of His resurrection and ascension, spring those Christian paradoxes, often spoken of in Scripture, that we are sorrowing, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

This, indeed, is our state at present; we have lost Christ and we have found Him; we see Him not, yet we discern Him. We embrace

* Matt. ix. 15.

His feet, yet He says, "Touch Me not." How is this? it is thus; we have lost the sensible and conscious perception of Him; we do not look on Him, hear Him, converse with Him, follow Him from place to place; but we enjoy the spiritual, immaterial, inward, mental, real sight and possession of Him; a possession more real and more present than that which the Apostles had in the days of His flesh, *because* it is spiritual, *because* it is invisible. We know that the closer any object of this world comes to us, the less we can contemplate it and comprehend it. Christ has come so close to us in the Christian Church (if I may so speak,) that we cannot gaze on Him or discern Him. He enters into us, He claims and takes possession of His purchased inheritance; He does not present Himself to us, but He takes us to Him. He makes us His members. Our faces are, as it were, turned from Him; we see Him not, and know not of His presence, except by faith, because He is over us and within us. And thus we may at the same time lament because we are not conscious of His presence, as the Apostle enjoyed it before His death; and may rejoice because we know we do possess it even more than they, according to the text, "whom having not seen (that is, with the bodily eyes,) ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*

Concerning this great and mysterious gift, the presence of Christ, invisible to sense, apprehended by faith, which seems to be spoken of in the text, and is suggested by this season of the year,† I purpose now to say some few words.

Now observe what the promise is, in the text and the verses following;—a new era was to commence, or what is called in Scripture "a day of the Lord." We know how much is said in Scripture about the awfulness and graciousness of a *day* of the Lord, which seems to be some special time of visitation, grace, judgment, restoration, righteousness, and glory. Much is said concerning days of the Lord in the old Testament. In the beginning we read of those august days, seven in number, each perfect, perfect all together, in which all things were created, finished, blessed, acknowledged, approved by Almighty God. And all things will end with a day greater still, which will open with the coming of Christ from heaven, and the judgment;—this is especially the Day of the Lord, and will introduce an eternity of blessedness in God's presence for all believers. And another special day predicted and fulfilled, is that long season which precedes and prepares for the

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

† Easter.

day of heaven, viz. the Day of the Christian Church, the Day of the Gospel, the Day of grace. This is a day much spoken of in the Prophets, and it is the day of which our Saviour speaks in the passage before us. Observe how solemn, how high a day it is : in His account of it, He says, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice ; your joy no man taketh from you. And in that Day ye shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name ; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. . . . At that Day ye shall ask in My Name, and I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world ; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." The Day, then, that dawned upon the Church at the Resurrection, and beamed forth in full splendour at the Ascension, that day which has no setting, which will be, not ended, but absorbed in Christ's glorious appearance from heaven to destroy sin and death ; that Day in which we are, is described in these words of Christ as a state of special divine manifestation, of special introduction into the presence of God. By Christ, says the Apostle, "we have the access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." And our Lord says ; "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him . . . We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." Thus we Christians stand in the courts of God Most High, and, in one sense, see His face ; for He who once was on earth, has now departed from this visible scene of things in a mysterious, twofold way, both to His Father and into our hearts, thus making the Creator and His creatures one ; according to His own words, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you ; yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more : but ye see Me ; because I live, ye shall live also. At that Day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."*

Now, in behalf of this mystery, I observe :—

* Rom. v. 2. Eph. ii. 6. Col. iii. 3. Phil. iii. 20. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Gal. iii. 27. John xiv. 21—23 ; 18—20.

First, that Christ really is with us now, whatever be the mode of it. This He says expressly Himself; "Lo, I *am with you* alway, even unto the end of the world." He even says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."* And in a passage already quoted more than once, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Christ's presence, then, is promised to us still, though He is on the right hand of the Father. You will say, "Yes; He is present as God." Nay, I answer; more than this, He is the Christ, and the Christ is promised, and Christ is man as well as God. This surely is plain even from the words of the text. He said He was going away. Did He go away as God or as man? "A little while, and ye shall not see Me;" this was on His death. He went away as man, He died as man; if, then, He promises to come again, surely He must mean that He would return as man, in the only sense, that is, in which He could return. As God He is ever present, never was otherwise than present, never went away; when His body died on the Cross and was buried, when His soul departed to the place of spirits, still He was with His disciples in His divine ubiquity. The separation of soul and body could not touch His impassable everlasting Godhead. When then He says He should go away, and come again and abide for ever, He is speaking not of His omnipresent divine nature, but of His two natures. As being Christ, He says that He, the Incarnate Mediator, shall be with His Church for ever.

But again: you may be led to explain His declarations thus; "He *has* come again, but in His Spirit; that is, His Spirit has come instead of Him; and when it is said that He is with us, this only means that His Spirit is with us." No one, doubtless, can deny this most gracious and consolatory truth, that the Holy Ghost is come; but why has He come? to supply Christ's absence, or to accomplish His presence? Surely to make Him present. Let us not for a moment suppose that God the Holy Ghost comes in such sense that God the Son remains away. No; He has not so come that Christ does not come, but rather He comes that Christ may come in His coming. Through the Holy Ghost we have communion with Father and Son. "In Christ we are builded together," says St. Paul, "for an habitation of God through the Spirit." "Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The Holy Spirit causes, faith welcomes, the indwelling of Christ in the heart. Thus the Spirit does not take the place of Christ in the soul, but secures

* Matt. xxviii. 20; xviii. 20.

that place to Christ. St. Paul insists much on this presence of Christ in those who have His Spirit. "Know ye not," he says, "that your bodies are the members of Christ?" "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . . ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And St. John: "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." And our Lord Himself, "Abide in Me and I in you: I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." The Holy Spirit, then, vouchsafes to come to us, that by its coming Christ may come to us, not carnally or visibly, but may enter into us. And thus He is both present and absent; absent in that He has left the earth, present in that He has not left the faithful soul; or, as He says Himself, "The *world* seeth Me no more, but *ye* see Me."*

You will say, How can He be present to the Christian and in the Church, yet not be on earth, but on the right hand of God? I answer, that the Christian Church is made up of faithful *souls*, and how can any of us say where the soul is, simply and really? The soul indeed acts through the body, and perceives through the body; and where is it? or what has it to do with place? or why should it be a thing incredible that the power of the Spirit should so visit the soul as to open upon it a divine manifestation, which yet it perceives not, because its present perceptions are only through the body. Who shall limit the power of the gracious Spirit of God? How know we, for instance, but that He makes Christ present with us, by making us present with Christ? As the earth goes round the sun, yet the sun is said to move, so our souls, in fact, may be taken up to Christ, when He is said to come to us. But no need to insist on one mode in which the mystery may be conceived, when ten thousand ways are possible with God, of which we know nothing. Scripture says enough to show us that influences may be exerted upon the soul so marvellous, that we cannot decide whether the soul remains in the body or not, while subjected to them. St. Paul speaks of himself, "Whether in the body," he says, "I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth: . . . caught up to the third heaven." And he repeats his statement: "I knew such a man," meaning himself, "whether in the body I cannot tell, or out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth: how that he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it

* Eph. ii. 22. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Eph. iii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 15; xii. 13. 27. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Col. i. 27. 1 John v. 12. John xv. 4, 5; xiv. 19.

is not lawful for a man to utter." St. Paul was brought into Paradise, yet his body remained where it was; and whether his soul was separated from it, was a question which he could not decide. How can we pretend to decide what the Holy Spirit may or may not do towards faithful souls now, and whether He does not manifest Christ to and in them, by bringing them to Christ? Again; consider Satan's power in showing our Lord all the kingdoms of the world "*in a moment of time*;" may not the Almighty Spirit much more do with us, what the evil one did with our Lord? May He not in less than a moment bring our souls into God's presence, while our bodies are on earth?

And again; while we know so little about our own souls, on the other hand, we are utterly ignorant of the state in which our Blessed Lord exists at present, and the relation of this visible world to Him; or whether it may not be possible for Him, in some mysterious way, to come to us, though He is set down on the right hand of God. Did He not, after his resurrection, come into a room of which the doors were shut, yet suffer Himself to be handled, to prove that He was not a spirit? Certainly then, though He is clothed in our nature, and is perfect man, yet His glorified body is not confined by those laws under which our mortal bodies lie.

But further; whether it is difficult to conceive or no, Scripture actually gives us one instance of His appearing after His ascension, as if to satisfy us that His presence is possible, though it be mysterious. We all know that He has often vouchsafed to appear to His saints in *visions*. Thus He appeared to St. John, as related in the Book of Revelation; and to St. Paul when he was at Corinth, at Jerusalem several times, and in the ship. *These* appearances were not an actual presence of Christ, as we may conjecture, but impressions divinely made, and shadows cast upon the mind. And in the same way we may explain His appearing to St. Stephen. When that blessed Martyr said, "Behold I see the heavens open, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," we may suppose he did not see this great sight really, but only had a vision of it. These, I repeat, are *visions*; but what shall we say to Christ's appearance to St. Paul on his conversion, while he was on the way to Damascus? For then the Lord Jesus plainly was seen and heard by him close at hand. "He fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord, said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* How was this? We do not know. Can a body be in two places at once? I do not

say so ; I only say, Here is a mystery. By way of contrast with this *real sight* of the Lord, we are presently told that to Ananias the Lord appeared “in a *vision*.” And hence, moreover, when Ananias came to Saul, he said that God had chosen him that *he* should “*see* that Just One and *hear* the voice of His mouth.”* And hence, too, he says himself in his Epistle to the Corinthians, “Am I not an Apostle ? am I not free ? have I not *seen* Jesus Christ our Lord ?”† Would he have said this, if he had had but a vision of Him ? Had he not many more visions of Him, not one only ? And again, after mentioning our Lord’s appearance to St. Peter, the Twelve, and five hundred brethren at once, and St. James, he adds, “last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.”‡ That is, he speaks of his having been favoured with a sight of Christ in as real, true, and literal a sense, as that in which the other Apostles had seen Him. St. Paul then saw Him, and heard Him speak who was on the right hand of God. And this literal sight seems to have been, for some unknown reason, necessary for the office of Apostle ; for, in accordance with St. Paul’s words, just now cited, St. Peter says, when an Apostle was to be chosen in the place of Judas, “Of these men which have companied with us . . . from the baptism of John unto that same day when He was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His resurrection.” And again, to Cornelius, “Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us.”§ If St. Paul only saw a vision of Christ, and not Christ “*verily and indeed*,” in that case he was not a witness of His resurrection. But if he *did* see Him, it is possible for Christ to be present with *us* also, as with him.

Once more : it may be said that “St. Paul was *conscious* of the presence of Christ on his conversion, and that he actually *saw* the sights and *heard* the sounds of paradise, but that we see and hear nothing. We, then, are not in Christ’s presence, else we should be conscious of it.” Now, with a view of meeting this objection, let us turn to the account of His appearances to His disciples after the Resurrection, which are most important, first, as showing that such an unconscious communion with Christ is possible ; next, that it is likely to be the sort of communion now granted to us, from the circumstance that in that period of forty days after the Resurrection, He began to be in that relation towards His Church, in which He is still, and probably intended to intimate to us thereby what His presence with us is now.

Now observe what was the nature of His presence in the Church

* Acts xxii. 14. † 1 Cor. ix. 1. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 8. § Acts i. 21, 22 ; x. 40, 41.

after His Resurrection. It was this, that He came and went as He pleased ; that material substances, such as the fastened doors, were no impediments to His coming ; and that when He was present His disciples did not, as a matter of course, know Him. St. Mark says He appeared to the two disciples who were going into the country, to Emmaus, "*in another form.*" St. Luke, who gives the account more at length, says, that while he talked with them their heart burned within them. And it is worth remarking, that the two disciples do not seem to have been conscious of this at the time, but on looking back, they recollected that as *having* been, which did not strike them when it *was*. "*Did not,*" they say, "*did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures ?*" But at the time, their hearts seem to have been holden (if we may use, the expression) as well as their eyes. They were receiving impressions, but could not *realize* to themselves that they were receiving them ; but afterwards they became aware of what had been. Let us observe, too, *when* it was that their eyes were opened ; here we are suddenly introduced to the highest and most solemn Ordinance of the Gospel, for it was when He consecrated and brake the bread that their eyes were opened. There is evidently a stress laid on this, for presently St. Luke sums up the account of the gracious occurrence with an allusion to it in particular ; "They told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in breaking of bread." For so it was ordained, that Christ should not be both seen and known at once ; first He was seen, then He was known. He is known to be present only by faith ; He is not recognised by sight. When He opened His disciples' eyes, He at once vanished. He removed His visible presence, and left but a memorial of Himself. He vanished from sight that He might be present in a sacrament ; and in order to connect His visible presence with His presence invisible, He for one instance manifested Himself to their open eyes ; manifested Himself, if I may so speak, while He passed from His hiding-place of sight without knowledge, to that of knowledge without sight.

Or again : consider the account of His appearing to St. Mary Magdalen. While she stood at the sepulchre weeping He appeared, but she knew Him not. When He revealed Himself, He did not, indeed, at once vanish away, but He would not let her touch Him ; as if, in another way, to show that His presence in His new kingdom was not to be one of sense. The two disciples were not allowed to *see* Him after recognising Him, St. Mary Magdalen was not allowed to *touch* Him. But afterwards, St. Thomas *was* allowed both to see and touch ; he had the full evidence of sense : but observe what our Lord says to

him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed : blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith is better than sight or touch.

Let so much suffice, by way of suggesting thoughts upon this most solemn and elevating subject. Christ has promised He will be with us to the end,—be with us, not only as He is in the unity of the Father and the Son, not in the omnipresence of the divine Nature, but personally, as the Christ, as God and man ; not present with us locally and sensibly, but in our hearts and to our faith. And it is by the Holy Ghost that this gracious communion is effected. How He effects it we know not ; in what precisely it consists we know not. We see Him not ; but we are to believe that we possess Him,—that we have been brought under the virtue of His healing hand, His life-giving breath, the manna flowing from His lips, and the blood issuing from His side. And hereafter, on looking back, we shall be conscious that we have been thus favoured. Such is the Day of the Lord in which we find ourselves, as if in fulfilment of the words of the prophet, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee. And it shall come to pass in that Day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark : but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night : but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."* Nay, even before the end comes, Christians, on looking back on years past, will feel, at least in a degree, that Christ has been with them, though they knew it not, only believed it, at the time. They will even recollect then the burning of their hearts. Nay ; though they seemed to feel or believe nothing at the time, yet afterwards, if they have come to Him in sincerity, they will experience a sort of heavenly fragrance and savour of immortality, when they least expect it, rising upon their minds, as if in token that God has been with them, and investing all that has taken place, which before seemed to them but earthly, with beams of glory. And this is true, in one sense, of all the rites and ordinances of the Church, of all providences that happen to us ; that, on looking back on them, though they seemed without meaning at the time, elicited no strong feeling, or were even painful and distasteful, yet if we come to them and submit to them in faith, they are afterwards transfigured, and we feel that it has been good for us to be there ; and we have a testimony, as a reward of our obedience, that Christ has fulfilled His promise, and, as He said, is here through the Spirit, though He be with the Father.

May He enable us to make full trial of His bounty, and to obtain a

* Zech. xiv. 5—7.

ull measure of blessing. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her and that right early. . . . Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."*

SERMON XI.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRESENCE.

JOHN vi. 50.

This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.

THE quarter of the year from Ash-Wednesday to Trinity Sunday may fittingly be called the Sacramental Season, as the Season preceding it is the Season of grace; and as we are specially called in the Christmas Season to sincerity of purpose, so now we are called to faith. God does good to those who are good and true of heart; and He reveals His mysteries to the believing. The heart is the good ground in which faith takes root, and the heavenly truths of the Gospel are like the dew, the sunshine, and the soft rain, which makes the heavenly seed to grow.

The text speaks of the greatest and highest of all the sacramental mysteries, which faith has been vouchsafed, that of Holy Communion. Christ, who died and rose again for us, is in it spiritually present, in the fulness of His death and of His resurrection. We call His presence in this Holy Sacrament a spiritual presence, not as if it were but a name or mode of speech, and He were really absent, but by way of expressing that He who is present there can neither be seen nor heard; that He cannot be approached or ascertained by any of the senses; that He is not present in place, nor present carnally, though He is really

* Psalm xlv. 4—11.

present. And how this is, of course is a mystery. All that we know or need know is that He *is* given to us, and that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Now, with reference to the text and the chapter from which it is taken, I begin by observing, what at first sight one would think no one could doubt, that this chapter of St. John does treat of the Lord's Supper, and is, in fact, a comment upon the account of it, given by the other three Evangelists. We know it is St. John's way to supply what his brethren omit, and that especially in matters of doctrine; and in like manner to omit what they contain. Hence, while all three contain an account of the institution of Holy Communion at the last Supper, St. John omits it; and, because they omit to enlarge upon the great gift contained in it, he enters upon it. This, I say, is his rule: thus, for instance, St. Matthew and St. Mark give an account of the accusation brought against our Lord at His trial, that He had said He could destroy and build again the Temple of God in three days. They do not inform us when He so said; accordingly, St. John supplies the omission; and, while he passes over the charge at the time of His trial, he relates in his second chapter the circumstances out of which it was framed some years before. The Jews had come to Him and asked Him for a sign; then said He, referring in His mind to His resurrection which was to be, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up;" meaning by Temple His own body, and by His raising it up His resurrection, after He had been put to death.

Again; St. Matthew and St. Mark also give an account of His instituting the Sacrament of Baptism. Christ instituted it on His ascending on high, but He did not explain the meaning and value of Baptism, at least there is no record of His doing so in St. Matthew and St. Mark. But St. John, while he omits mention of the institution of that Sacrament after the Resurrection, does teach us its doctrinal meaning, by means of a previous discourse of our Lord's with Nicodemus on the subject, a discourse which he alone of the Evangelists introduces. And in like manner, I say, in the chapter before us he explains as a doctrine, what the other Evangelists deliver as an ordinance. And, further, it is remarkable that in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, no express mention is made of Baptism, though that discourse evidently is on the subject of it. Our Lord speaks of being born "*of water and the Spirit*;" He does not say, "*of Baptism and the Spirit*," yet none of us can doubt that Baptism is meant. In like manner, in the passage before us, He does not say definitely that bread and wine are His Body and Blood; but He speaks only of bread, and, again, of His flesh and blood; words, however, which as evidently refer to the

Sacrament of His Supper, as His discourse to Nicodemus refers to Baptism, in spite of His not naming Baptism in express words. Of course it would be very unreasonable to say that when He spoke of "water and the Spirit," He did not allude to Baptism; and it is as unreasonable, surely, to say that in the chapter before us He does not refer to His Holy Supper.

The bearing, then, of our Lord's sacred words, would seem to be as follows, if one may venture to investigate it. At Capernaum, in the chapter now before us, He solemnly declares to His Apostles that none shall live for ever, but such as eat and drink His flesh and blood; and then afterwards, just before He was crucified, as related in the other three gospels, He points out to them His way in which this mystery of grace was to be fulfilled in them. He assigns the consecrated Bread as that Body of which He had spoken, and the consecrated Wine as His Blood; and in partaking of the Bread and the Cup, they were partakers of His Body and Blood.

It is remarkable, too, considering that our Lord's institution of His Supper took place just before His betrayal by Judas, and that Judas had just partaken of it, that in the discourse before us He alludes (as He does) to Judas. "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" as if He had before His mind, in His divine prescience, what was to take place when He instituted the Sacrament formally. Observe, too, at the time of that last Supper, He recurs to the idea of *choosing* them. "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen."*

When, then, Christ used the words of the text and of other parts of the chapter containing it, He was describing prospectively that gift, which, in due season, the consecrated bread and wine were to convey to His Church for ever. Speaking with reference to what was to be, He says; "I am that Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

In corroboration I would observe that our Lord had been just then working the miracle of the loaves, in which He had actually blessed and broken the Bread; *upon this*, He goes on to say as follows, "I have wrought a miracle on the bread and fed you, but the time shall come when I will give you the true Eucharistic Bread, which is not like these

* John xiii. 18.

perishable barley loaves, but such, that by it you shall live for ever, for it is My flesh." When, then, before He was taken away, He *did* take bread, and blessed, and brake, using just the same action as He had used in the instance of the miracle of the loaves, and even *called it* His body, how could the Apostles doubt that by that significant action He intended to recall to their minds His discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, and that they were to recognise in it the fulfilment of His promise? He had said He would give them a bread which should be His flesh and should have life, and surely they recollected this well. Who among us, had He been present, but, under such circumstances, would have recognised in His institution of His Supper the fulfilment of that previous promise? Surely, then, we cannot doubt that this announcement in St. John does look on towards, and is accomplished in, the consecrated elements of Holy Communion.

If this be so, it requires no proof at all how great is the gift in that Sacrament. If this chapter does allude to it, then the very words "Body and Blood" show it. Nor do they show it at all the less, if we do not know what they precisely mean; for on the face of the matter they evidently mean something very high, so high that therefore we cannot comprehend it.

Nothing can show more clearly how high the blessing is, than to observe that the Church's tendency has been, not to detract from its marvellousness, but to increase it. The Church has never thought little of the gift; so far from it, we know that one very large portion of Christendom holds more than we hold. That belief, which goes beyond ours, shows how great the gift is really. I allude to the doctrine of what is called transubstantiation, which we do not admit, and which nothing here said tends to imply; or that the bread and wine cease to be, and that Christ's sacred Body and Blood are directly seen, touched, and handled, under the *appearances* of Bread and Wine. This we consider there is no ground for saying, and surely our Lord's own words contain marvel enough, without adding anything to them by way of explanation. Let us, then, now consider them in themselves, apart from additions which we need not.

He says, then, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise Him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed."

1. About these words I observe first, that they evidently declare on the face of them some very great mystery. How can they be otherwise taken? If they do not, they must be a figurative way of declaring something which is not mysterious, but plain and intelligible.

But is it conceivable that He who is the Truth and Love itself, should have used difficult words when plain words would do? Why should He have used words, the sole effect of which, in that case, would be to perplex, to startle us needlessly? Does His mercy delight in creating difficulties? Does He put stumbling-blocks in our way without cause? Does He excite hopes, and then disappoint them? It is possible; He may have some deep purpose in so doing: but which is more likely, that His meaning is beyond us, or His words beyond His meaning? All who read such awful words as those in question will be led by the first impression of them, either with the disciples to go back, as at a hard saying, or with St. Peter to welcome what is promised: they will be excited in one way or the other, with incredulous surprise or with believing hope? And are these feelings, discordant indeed, yet all of them deep, after all unfounded? Are they to go for nothing? Are they no witness of our Saviour's real meaning? This desire, and again this aversion, so naturally raised, are they without a real object, and the mere consequence of a general mistake on all hands, of what Christ meant as imagery, for literal truth? Surely this is very improbable.

2. Next, consider our Lord's allusion to the Manna. Persons there are who explain our eating Christ's flesh and blood, as merely meaning our receiving a *pledge* of the *effects* of the *passion* of His Body and Blood; that is, in other words, of the *favour* of Almighty God; but how can Christ's giving us His Body and Blood mean merely His giving us a pledge of His favour? Surely these awful words are far too clear and precise thus carelessly to be treated. Christ, as I have said, surely would not use such definite terms, did He mean to convey an idea so far removed from them, and so easy of expression and simple language. Now it increases the force of this consideration to observe that the manna, to which He compares His gift, was not a figure of speech, but a something definite and particular, really given, really received. The manna was not simply health, or life, or God's favour, but a certain something which caused health, continued life, and betokened God's favour. The manna was a gift external to the Israelites, and external also to God's own judgment of them and resolve concerning them, a gift created by Him and partaken by His people. And Christ, in like manner, says, that He Himself is to us the *true* Manna, the *true* Bread that came down from heaven; not like that manna which could not save its partakers from death, but a life-imparting manna. What therefore the manna was in the wilderness, that surely is the manna in the Christian Church; the manna in the wilderness was a real gift, taken and eaten; so is the manna in the Church. It

is not God's mercy, or favour, or imputation ; it is not a state of grace, or the promise of eternal life, or the privileges of the Gospel, or the new covenant ; it is not, much less, the doctrine of the Gospel, or faith in that doctrine ; but it is what our Lord says it is, the gift of His own precious Body and Blood, really given, taken, and eaten as the manna might be, (though in a way unknown,) at a certain particular time, and a certain particular spot ; namely, as I have already made it evident, at the time and spot when and where the Holy Communion is celebrated.

3. Next, I observe, that our Lord reproves the multitude for not dwelling on the miracle of the loaves *as* a miracle, but only as a means of gaining food for the body. Now observe, this is *contrary* to what He elsewhere says, with a view of discountenancing the Jews' desire after signs and wonders. It would seem, then, as if there must be something peculiar and singular in what He is here setting before them. He generally represses their desire for signs, but here He stimulates it. He finds fault here, because they did not dwell upon the *miracle*. "Ye seek me," He says, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Now supposing the Eucharistic Gift is a special Sign, the Sign which He meant to give them for ever of His divine power, this will account for the difference between His conduct on this occasion and on others, it being as unbelieving to overlook signs when given, as to ask for them when withheld. It will account for His bidding them marvel, when about to promise them Bread from heaven. They were but imitating their ancestors in the wilderness. Their ancestors, on the seventh day, went out to gather manna in spite of Moses' telling them they would not find it. What was this but to look for mere food, and to forget that it was miraculously given, and as such immediately dependent on the Giver ? Let me ask, is their conduct in this age very different, who come to the Lord's Table without awe, admiration, hope ; without that assemblage of feelings which the expectation of so transcendent a marvel should raise in us ? Let us fear, lest a real, though invisible work of power being vouchsafed to us, greater far than that of the loaves, which related only to this life's sustenance, we lose the benefit of it by disbelieving it. This reflection is strengthened by finding that St. Paul expressly warns the Corinthians of the great peril of "not *discerning* the Lord's Body."

4. In what has been said, it has been implied that the miracle of the Loaves was a type of Holy Communion ; this it is actually declared to be in the chapter before us, and much follows from it. For let it be considered, if the type be a miracle, which it is, how great

must the fulfilment be, unless the shadow be greater than the reality ? unless, indeed, we are willing to argue, like those misbelievers who deny the Atonement, on the ground that, though the Jewish Priests were types of Christ, the Antitype need not be a Priest Himself. Moreover, the incomprehensible nature of the miracle of the loaves is a kind of protection of the mystery of the Eucharist against objections with which men are wont to assail it ; as, for instance, that it is impossible. For to speak of five thousand persons being fed with five loaves, may be speciously represented to be almost a contradiction in terms. How can it be ? did the substance of the bread grow ? or was it the same bread here and there and everywhere, for this man and for that, at one and the same time ? Or was it created in the shape of bread, in that ultimate condition into which the grain is reduced by the labour of man, and this created again and again out of nothing, till the whole five thousand were satisfied. What, in short, is *meant* by multiplying the loaves ? As to Christ's other miracles, they are, it may be said, intelligible, though supernatural. We do not know *how* a blind man's eyes are opened, or the dead raised ; but we know what *is meant* by saying that the blind saw, or the dead arose : but what *is meant* by saying that the loaves fed five thousand persons ? Such then is the objection which may be brought against the miracle of the loaves ; and let it be observed, it is just such as this which is urged against the mystery of Christ's Presence in Holy Communion. If the marvellousness of the miracle of the loaves is no real objection to its truth, neither is the marvellousness of the Eucharistic presence any real difficulty in our believing that gift.

And as if still more closely to connect this Holy Sacrament with the miracle of the Loaves, and to make the latter interpret the former, our Lord, as I have observed, wrought the miracle of the loaves by means of the same outward acts which He observed in the mystery of His Supper, and which His Apostles have carefully recorded as the appointed means of consecrating it. St. John says, "*He took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to the disciples.*" Compare this with St. Luke's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper. "*He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them.*" Again, a fuller account of the consecration of the loaves is given by the other Evangelists, thus :—"He . . . *took the five loaves and the two fishes,*" says St. Matthew, "*and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples.*" And this, on the other hand, is told us by the same Evangelist, in his account of the institution of the Holy Communion. "*Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples.*" Again in the second mira-

cle of the seven loaves, He observed the same form :—" He *took* the seven loaves and the fishes, and *gave thanks*, and *brake* them, and *gave* to His disciples." And the form is the same in the account of our Lord's celebration of the Sacrament after His resurrection :—" As He sat at meat with them, He *took* bread and *blessed* it, and *brake*, and *gave* to them." And of St. Paul we read, " he *took* bread and *gave thanks* to God in the presence of them all ; and when he had *broken* it, he began to eat."*

One cannot doubt, then, that the taking bread, blessing or giving thanks, and breaking, is a necessary form in the Lord's Supper, since it is so much insisted on in these narratives ; and it evidently betokens something extraordinary,—else why *should* it be insisted on ?—and what that is, the miracle of the loaves tells us. For there the same form is observed, and there it was Christ's outward instrument in working a great " work of God." The feeding, then, of the multitude with the loaves, interprets the Lord's Supper ; and as the one is a supernatural work, so is the other also.

One more observation I will make besides. At first sight, an objection may be brought against what has been said from a circumstance, which, when examined, will be found rather to tell the other way. The Jews objected to our Lord, that He had said what was incredible, when He spoke of giving us His flesh. They " strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat ?" Our Saviour in answer, instead of retracting what He had said, spoke still more strongly—" Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." But when they still murmured at it, and said, " This is a hard saying, who can hear it ?"—then He did in appearance withdraw His words. He said, " It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." It would take us too long to enter now into the meaning of this declaration ; but let us, for argument's sake, allow that He seems in them to qualify the wonderful words He had used at first ; what follows from such an admission ? This :—that our Lord acted according to His usual course on other occasions when persons refused His gracious announcements, not urging and insisting on them, but as if withdrawing them, and thus, in one sense aiding those persons even in rejecting what they ought to have accepted without hesitation. This rule of God's dealings with unbelief, we find most fully exemplified in the instance of Pharaoh, whose heart God hardened because he himself hardened it. And so in this very chapter, as if in allu-

* John vi. 11. Luke xxii. 19. Matt xiv. 19. Matt. xxvi. 26. Matt. xv. 36. Luke xxiv. 30. Acts xxvii. 35.

sion to some such great law, He says, "Murmur not among yourselves ; No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him ;" as if He said, "It is by a divine gift that ye believe ; beware, lest by objections you provoke God to take from you His aid, His preventing and enlightening grace." And then, after they *had* complained, He did in consequence withdraw from them that gracious light which He had given, and spoke the words in question about the flesh and spirit, which would seem to carnal minds to unsay, or explain away, what He had said. But observe, He adds, "There are some of you that believe not. . . . *Therefore* said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me except it were given unto Him of My Father."

All this is parallel, let it be observed, to His dealings with the Jews in the tenth chapter of the same Gospel. He there declares, "I and My Father are One." The Jews, instead of embracing, stumble at the truth, and accuse Him of blasphemy, as if He being a man made Himself God. This was their inference from His words, and a correct inference, just as in the other case they rightly understood Him to promise that He would give us His flesh to eat. But when they, instead of embracing the truth which they had correctly inferred, instead of humbling themselves before the Mystery, repel it from them, He does not force it upon them. He does not tell them, that it *is* a correct conclusion which they had drawn, but He recedes (as it were) and explains away His words. He asks them whether the rulers and prophets spoken of in the Old Testament were not called gods figuratively ; if so, much more might He call Himself God, and the Son of God, being the Christ. He does not tell them that He *is* God, though He is ; but He argues with them as if He admitted as true the ground of their objection. In judgment He reduces His creed to names and figures. As then He is really God, though He seemed on one occasion to say that He was but called so figuratively, so He gives us verily and indeed His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, though, on another occasion, after saying so, He seemingly went on to explain those words into a strong saying ; and as none but heretics take advantage of His apparent denial that He is God, so none but they ought to make use of His apparent denial that He vouchsafes to us His flesh, and that the Holy Communion is a high and heavenly means of giving it.

Such reflections as the foregoing lead us to this conclusion,—to feel that it is our duty to make much of Christ's miracles of love ; and instead of denying or feeling cold towards them, to desire to possess our hearts with them. There is indeed a mere carnal curiosity,—a high-minded, irreverent prying into things sacred ; but there is also a holy and devout curiosity which all who love God will in their measure feel.

The former is exemplified in the instance of the men of Bethshemesh, when they looked into the ark ; the latter in the case of the Holy Angels, who (as St. Peter tells us) “ desire to look into ” the grace of God in the Gospel. Under the Gospel surely there are wonders performed, such as “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.” Let us feel interest and awful expectation at the news of them ; let us put ourselves in the way of them ; let us wait upon God day by day for the treasures of grace, which are hid in Christ, which are great beyond words or thought.

Above all, let us pray Him to draw us to Him, and to give us faith. When we feel that His mysteries are too severe for us, and occasion us to doubt, let us earnestly wait on Him for the gift of humility and love. Those who love and who are humble will apprehend them ;—carnal minds do not seek them, and proud minds are offended at them ;—but while love desires them, humility bears them. Let us pray Him then to give us such a real and living insight into the blessed doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God, of His birth of a Virgin, His atoning death, and resurrection, that we may desire that the Holy Communion may be the effectual type of that gracious Economy. No one realizes the Mystery of the Incarnation but must feel disposed towards that of Holy Communion. Let us pray Him to give us an earnest longing after Him—a thirst for His presence—an anxiety to find Him—a joy on hearing that He is to be found, even now, under the veil of sensible things,—and a good hope that *we* shall find him there. Blessed indeed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. They have their reward *in* believing ; they enjoy the contemplation of a mysterious blessing, which does not even enter into the thoughts of other men ; and while they are more blessed than others in the gift vouchsafed to them, they have the additional privilege of knowing they are vouchsafed it.

SERMON XII.

FAITH THE TITLE FOR JUSTIFICATION.

MATTHEW viii. 11.

Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lord here says, what He frequently says elsewhere, that the Gentiles, who were heretofore thought reprobate, should inherit the favour of God with Abraham and the other patriarchs. Moreover, He says, that they would gain that great privilege *through faith*; for the words immediately preceding the text are, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith,” that is, as that of the Centurion, “no, not in Israel;” then He adds, “and I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” St. Paul, it is scarcely necessary to observe, declares the same thing most emphatically; so that he may be called the Apostle, as of the Gentiles, so of faith:—as for instance, “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen *through faith*, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall *all* nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.”* In the history of Cornelius’s baptism, the same great truth is declared by St. Peter, with some accidental variety of expression. “In every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.”†

Now here the question may be asked, and has been asked,—If all that is necessary for acceptance with God be faith in Christ, how is Church Communion, how are Sacraments, necessary? It is taught in Church, that the grace of Christ is not a *mere* favourable regard with which He views us, a *mere* state of acceptance and external imputation

* Gal. iii. 8, 9.

† Acts x. 35.

of His merits given to faith, but that it is a real and spiritual principle residing in the Church, and communicated from the Church into the heart of individuals, and extended far and wide, according as they come for it to the Church, and diffused all over the earth by their joining the Church. This is what is taught by the Church itself of its own gift; and the question is, How is this consistent with the impression legitimately produced on the mind by such passages of Scripture as the text and others such as I have cited? *They* seem to speak as if the great gift of Christ were His favourable account of us, and the means of it faith; whereas *we* seem to speak of it as being an inward renewal in us, and the means of it being a union with the Church. *They* seem to speak of it as what any one may gain for himself, and have by himself. We speak of it as a certain gift, one and the same for all, gained by coming to it and for it. *They* seem to speak of the way of life as being something individual and solitary; we speak of it as a social and united enterprise, and a journey in company.

To this it may be replied, that it is unfair and dangerous to insist on certain texts to the exclusion of others; that true though it be, that some texts speak of faith and nothing else, still others speak of Church communion and nothing else, as being the way of salvation; and if so, *both*, both faith and Church communion, are necessary, and that one will not save without the other; that our duty is to come to Christ *in* faith, *through* the Church,—and if we do this, we shall observe the rule given us both in the one set of texts, and in the other,—and that they deal with Scripture as violently, who think to be saved by faith without Church fellowship, as those who think to be saved by Church fellowship without faith. For instance, if our Lord says, “All things are possible to him that believeth,” yet He elsewhere says, “If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” If He says, “Believe and ye shall have,” yet elsewhere, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” If St. Paul says, that we are justified by faith without the works of the Law, still he expressly assures us, that Christ saves us “by the laver of regeneration,” “that as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,” and there is “one baptism, one body, one spirit,” as well as “one faith,” and that the Church is “the pillar and ground of the truth.” Further, if St. Peter says, that every one is accepted with God who fears Him and works righteousness, yet he elsewhere says that “baptism saves us,” and exhorts his hearers to be baptized, in order to the remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

And further, it may be shown, that nothing can be more natural than

this union of *various* distinct means, in order to gain some particular benefit, and that there is nothing forced in thus interpreting the one set of expressions in harmony with the other ; and nothing in the impression conveyed by the one inconsistent with the impression conveyed by the other. We have cases of this kind every day, and we use similar forms of speech every day. For instance, were a person to say that he would give some benefit, food or clothing, to any poor person who wanted it, would any one say that he broke his promise, if he appointed some particular place where the food or the clothing was to be got, and where those who desired it must go for it? And would it be thought reasonable, if a poor person accosted him abruptly in the public way, and insisted on his giving it directly from himself, without his having to go to the place appointed? and why, forsooth?—on the ground that the other had said that he would give to any one who asked of him. As then a charitable person might say, “ Ask, and ye shall have,” and yet might not mean to excuse those who asked from the necessity of going to some place, and at some hour, when and where he dispensed his charity ; so in like manner Christ may say by Himself or His Apostles, “ Ask, and ye shall receive.” “ Believe, and ye shall be saved,” and yet may mean to enjoin upon us certain rules, and to appoint a certain treasure-house, for our gaining that gift to which our asking and our faith are sufficient to entitle us.

This is so plain, that it is hardly necessary to say so much about it ; but it may be objected, that it is more true in itself, than to the present purpose : for there are passages of Scripture, it may be said, which speak so largely and absolutely, that to suppose any conditions implied which are not specified, any other means of gaining God’s favour besides simple faith, is doing violence to their language. For instance, suppose a rich man promised an alms to his poor neighbour, and then, when the latter came for it, said, “ I promised you indeed an alms, and as a free gift—and I mean to give it you—nevertheless, I shall exact *one* condition, which I did not then mention, but which I meant nevertheless, and which is not inconsistent in set terms with what I said, and this one condition is, that you should walk some five hundred miles for my bounty, to some place where I have stored it, or that you shall first learn a foreign language, and petition me in it;”—every one would feel that such conduct was a mockery in the rich man, and a cruelty to the poor one. Now, it is contended by the persons I speak of, that faith is so prominently spoken of in certain passages of Scripture, as *the* means of gaining the benefits of Christ’s death, that it *must* be meant to be the *only* means ; the silence observed in such passages concerning other means being equivalent to a denial of any other ; and

therefore, that in very truth we must be justified by faith only in a full and absolute and real sense, if the word of Scripture be sure, not in a certain sense merely, or in a certain point of view, but in a sense peculiar and proper, by a prerogative which no other means possesses, whether rite, or work, or temper of mind.

For example, it is said by St. Paul without restriction, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that *call* upon Him. For *whosoever* shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" And then the Apostle concludes; "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Surely, it may be said, these words plainly do imply that the *knowledge* of the truth is all that is necessary for any person's application of it to himself. Give him a book, the Bible; give him the revealed doctrine, or what St. Paul calls the word of God; give him a preacher;—he requires nothing more. He may at will seize, claim, appropriate, use the promise. He has but to call, and he will be answered; he has but to believe, and he is justified. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*

Again; how wide, it may be said, how comprehensive, how simple are the words, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."† Is Scripture, it may be said, for plain men or not?—does it speak to the artless, guileless, and simple-minded, or does it require a refined and cultivated intellect to understand it? If to the poor the Gospel is preached, can we doubt that it is meant to convey that meaning which at first sight it has?—that all to whom the sound of the Gospel comes have but to call on God, to ask, to pray, to believe, and according to their faith so shall it be done unto them.

And such, too, it may be added, was St. Paul's language to the jailor at Philippi, he said; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."‡

There is certainly much in such considerations, and they are by no means lightly to be put aside. They do seem, with some explanation, to be true. I mean, it does seem as if every one to whom the message of life came, had an *offer* of it; had, if he chose to avail himself of it, an interest in it, a right to take it to himself; that his hearing is

* Rom. x. 10—17.

† Matt. vii. 7, 8.

‡ Acts xvi. 31.

his warrant, his knowledge is his evidence, that his believing is his power. This would seem to be a broad truth, whatever else is true ; and in the present most miserable state of Christendom there is comfort in believing it. I proceed, then, to explain in what sense it is true, what it implies, and what it does not involve, and what follows from it.

I say, then, that hearing and believing,—that is, knowing, confessing, and asking,—give us under the covenant of grace, a title, nay, are the sole necessary right and title to receive the gifts purchased for us by our Lord Jesus on the Cross. And now observe, first, what this does *not* imply.

1. It does not imply any thing about the time or mode of our justification. Faith is our right and title to be justified, the sole right and title necessary ; but has a person that forthwith, to which he has a right ? is nothing more necessary for the possession and enjoyment of things than a just title to them ? Is it so in human matters ? is not a right the first thing indeed, but is it all that is necessary for having, holding and using ? Are there no forms to be gone through, no necessary instruments of possession ? Or, take again the case of the children of Christian parents. The infant children of Christians have a right to be made Christians ; but are they made Christians merely *by* the right to be so made ? if so, why do we baptize them ? Faith, then, in the general scheme of the Gospel, is what their very birth and origin is, in the particular case of the children of Christians. It constitutes a claim in our case that we should be made Christians ; it is an evidence, an inward spiritual token from God that he means us to be made Christians ; it is a promise from Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, that He means us, that He wills us, to be Christians. To him that hath, more shall be given. Him whom God gifts with faith, will He also in due time gift with evangelical, justifying grace : but the first gift does not give the second gift, it does not involve it ; it does but prepare for it, it does but constitute a title to it. Again : good works form our title for heaven ; but does a person who is fruitful in good works and prepared for the next world at once die ? or rather, I should ask, is he without death translated at once both soul and body into heaven ? is there nothing to wait for ? nothing to go through, even in the case of those who are ready for death ? are there no persons detained in the flesh, who, if they died yesterday or a year since, would go to heaven ? are there no saints upon earth ? Surely, then, to have a title is not the same thing as to be in possession ; and all the texts which can be brought to prove that faith is our title *to be* justified, fail to prove of themselves that it involves in it our justification, unless indeed children are Christians without baptism because their parents were

Christians, and Saints are in heaven before death because they are fit for heaven. If, I say, the texts in question do but show that faith is our sole title to be justified, they prove nothing about any thing else. A title to a certain benefit is still a title, whether the benefit has been conferred or not. It does not cease to be the title because we have the benefit, nor is it less of a title because we have not yet received it. It is not at all bound to past, present, or future. It is that *on* which we once received, or *by* which we now hold, or *for* which we are still claiming the benefit, as the case may be. If, then, the texts in question merely say that he who has faith has a right to the benefit, of redemption, they merely say, (which is indeed much, but is all they say,) that he who believes *shall* to a certainty at some time and by some means be justified. And that they say this, and no more, is plain from those texts to which reference has already been made. For instance, "Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved;" a promise is given, but the how, the when, the where, the by what, these particulars are by the very form of the proposition left uncertain. Time is not mentioned, nor mode;—but a *promise* given, that it *shall* be.

But, on the other hand, if we say that faith is the mode or the time as well as the title, we may as well say, too, that it is the *Author* of our justification. We may as well say it supersedes Christ's Atonement as a meritorious cause, as Baptism as an instrument. And so again of the text; it says, that many shall *come* from the East and West, and *sit* down in the kingdom of heaven. Is coming the same as sitting down? coming stands for faith, sitting down for baptism; coming is our title, sitting down is possession. Coming goes before, leads to, sitting down; but it is not sitting down. A title is one thing, and possession is another. And the same might be shown of the other texts which are commonly cited in the question.

2. This becomes still more clear, on considering that whereas *faith* is in some passages made the means of gaining acceptance, *prayer* is, in other places, spoken of as the means; and, moreover, prayer is evidently the *expression* of faith, so that whatever is true of prayer is true of faith also. Now it is too plain to insist upon, that, though success is certainly promised to prayer in the *event*, yet the *time* of succeeding is *not* promised, and so far from it being immediate, we are expressly told to pray again and again, to continue instant in prayer, *in order to succeed*. For instance, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Here salvation is, as it were, put in our own power; to *hear* the invitation is our sufficient title for coming; to *pray* for the gift is the sure and certain

means of receiving it. Most true ; but does the word *seek* imply one act, and one only ? does it imply that we gain at once what we ask for ? The contrary : we are elsewhere told to “*strive* to enter in at the strait gate,” for many will “*seek* to enter in,” that is, seek *without* striving, “and shall not be able.”* Again ; “He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”† It is not one act of prayer, then, or two, but a course and continuance of prayer, which entitle us to God’s mercy ; and therefore, in like manner, it is not one act of faith which justifies us, or two acts, but to live in faith and to walk in faith is our title ; and to *begin* to have faith is to enter the road leading, infallibly leading, to justification, by a series of events or conditions, of which faith is the first and sole one on our part. I say that the message “Believe and Thou shalt have,” “Call and thou shalt be saved,” as little imply that one act of faith, one call, is all that is requisite, as “Ask and it shall be given you,” implies that we can gain answers to prayer at the willing. Sometimes, doubtless, God mercifully answers at one prayer, and sometimes He justifies at one act of faith ; but I am speaking of what we have a right to gather from such passages ; and I say, that all they can prove is this, that he who has faith has a *promise* from God that he *shall*, shall in God’s own way, in God’s own time, shall certainly and surely in the event, be justified ; that, as he who begins to pray will sooner or later obtain, so he who believes shall, unless he “draw back,” be justified.

3. But this is made a matter of certainty by the *instances* which we find given us in the New Testament of justification by faith. We find that faith was not thought enough, but was made to lead on to other things. A man was not thought to have all, to have obtained, on believing, but to have a title thereby to find and obtain. For instance, even in a case which admits of being otherwise interpreted in some respects, so much as this is certain. Cornelius was a special instance of *faith* ; but did this faith suffice to make him a justified Christian ? No ; it did but give him a *title* to it. It moved the God of mercy to work miracles for him. There was this circumstance, special and remarkable in his case, that the first spiritual gift was not given through baptism, but still it was *not* given at once upon his faith. So far from it, he had to send to an Apostle *before* it was given.

Take again the instance of St. Paul himself. By faith he obeyed the heavenly vision, and went into Damascus, and waited. But he *had* to wait, he was not justified. He waited three days—he prayed ; then

* Luke xiii. 24.

† Luke xviii. 1.

Ananias was sent ; and *he* said, "Arise, and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the Name of the Lord."* To believe, to confess, to pray, to call, were the sufficient *title* for the gift ; but baptism was the instrument of receiving it. St. Paul having faith, was sure, in God's great mercy, eventually of receiving baptism, but not at once.

Again, consider the case of the Ethiopian Eunuch. "Faith cometh by hearing ; and hearing by the word of God." This was fulfilled in his case. He read the Prophet Isaiah concerning Christ's atoning sufferings. He heard Philip preaching on the sacred text. He had faith in Christ. He had a *title* to justification ; but he was baptized in order to *receive* it. Hear his own words declaring it. "See, here is water ; what doth hinder me to be baptized ?"† You see, baptism was the great end which he was seeking ; why, except that it conveyed the gift of life ? Would it have been rational to have been so earnest for a dead ordinance, for a mere outward rite ? especially since now he had heard, and had believed. Would he have asked about *hindrances* to a mere outward rite, when he had already obtained the inward gift ? No, he sought baptism because it was worth seeking. And Philip treats it as such : he says, "Thou mayest, *if*." He puts a condition. Men do not put conditions before worthless things. A condition is a price ;—men do not buy nothing with something. The Eunuch was going to *receive* a *gift*, else there had been no delay, no scrutiny, no engagement. Now what *was* the condition ? "If thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest." If thou believest. "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Faith, then, was the *title*, the sole *title*. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still : and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch ; and he baptized him." At length it was finished. The deed was done—the gift was given—justification was accomplished—and therefore, "when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." He did not take him away before ; He did not think it enough for Philip to preach. Philip preached *and* baptized ; and then he was caught away. Had he but preached, and not baptized, and the Eunuch still had had faith, then doubtless, in God's great mercy and good providence, another messenger from Him would have baptized him ; the Eunuch would not have gone without baptism ; he would not have been frustrated of the fruit of his faith ; only he would not have had it so soon. He would still have had the title, the claim to baptism. But God "finished the work, and cut it short in righteousness."‡ He justified the believing soul through water ; and then Philip,

* Acts xxii. 16.

† Acts viii. 36.

‡ Rom. ix. 28.

his instrument, was caught away, and the new Christian “went on his way rejoicing.”

One more instance : St. Paul said to the jailor, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,”—and then he and Silas “spake unto Him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” Here, then, “faith came by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Accordingly, the *promise* was unto him and his ; and what next ? Let St. Peter tell us what, on the day of Pentecost. “The *promise*,” he says, “is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call ;” and therefore, “be *baptized*.” This was the issue—be baptized—why ? “for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” What St. Peter said to the Jews, that St. Paul did to the jailor, or rather St. Silas did it ; for St. Paul says of himself, that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel. *He* did not baptize, because so great a gift was baptism, that the Apostles wished to avoid the chance of seeming to baptize in their own name, and of seeming to be setting up *themselves* for the meritorious means through which men are saved. St. Paul says, then, “I thank my God that I baptized *none* of you,” except one or two whom he mentions, “lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.”* As water is a feeble element, so the minister chosen was the feeblest vessel in the Church, to show that all was of God. Accordingly, the Apostle generally had with him some friend, who, while a companion and comfort to him, administered those offices which he did not take upon him. Philip was a deacon, and baptized ; St. Paul was an Apostle, and did not baptize ; and therefore, I say it is more likely, in the case before us, that Silas baptized the jailor, and not St. Paul. However, baptized he was, and all his ; and then, and not before, took place in him the same inward change which happened to the Eunuch, “he *rejoiced*, believing in God with all his house.” He had *believed* before baptism, but he did not *rejoice* before baptism—he rejoiced after baptism. Men rejoice when they have *found* what they seek. Both the noble Ethiopian and the humble jailor rejoiced on their being *baptized*. Faith gave a title : baptism gave possession. Faith procured them what nothing else would procure, and baptism conveyed it.

Enough has been said to explain in what sense faith is and does, and what nothing else is and does. He who has the means of hearing the Gospel, and believes in it heartily, has, not a means of gaining, but a title to receive justification ; he has within him a warrant, not that God has justified him, but that He will justify him. And this was so

* 1 Cor. i. 14, 15.

fully understood and received by the Early Church of Christ, that, supposing a person, who was candidate and under preparation for baptism, happened to die before its administration, it was believed that that person on his death was put by God's mercy into that state of salvation, into which he would have entered by baptism. Or, again, suppose a person was martyred for his faith and not baptized, then, too, his salvation was considered to be secured in like manner without baptism. For where a man has true faith, Christ, we humbly trust, would rather work a miracle for his justification, than deprive him of that which He graciously considers as his right. He that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it in some way or other and bring it to perfection. He will, by His providence, create Churches and Ministers of Baptism round about the souls whom He visits; or He will lead them from Ethiopia to Jerusalem, and send Philip to meet them; or He will speak in dreams by His Angel, and send unto Joppa for Peter; or in a prison He will even make a spring of water gush forth miraculously from the rock at an Apostle's voice; or He will, if all other means are suspended, reconcile the soul to Him without the appointed ordinance at the moment of dissolution. In some way or other, where He gives faith, He will open a way for saving grace. For whom he foreknows, them He predestinates; and whom He predestinates, them He calls; and whom He calls, them He justifies; and whom He justifies, them He glorifies.

And now it is plain what a consolatory light these considerations throw upon the present disordered state of Christendom. I trust there is no presumption in thus interpreting Scripture, and in thus judging of the state of things which we see; and if not, we may be thankful in being able to do so. It is most true, then, and never to be explained away, that the grace of the Gospel is lodged in a divinely-appointed body, and spreads from it. It diffuses itself like leaven over the world, according to the parable, by a continuity and progression; not found here, and found there, in a detached isolated way, but here, and there, and wherever it is, as portions of one whole. As well may branches of a tree be strewed on the earth, and the trunk be in the ground, and the leaves be whirled in the air, and the fruit be at the bottom of the stream, and yet all be one whole living tree, as the Church be divided. It is impossible. None who are external to it are included in it; it is quite a truism to say this. Neither faith nor anything else can make that to be, which is not. Wishing will not serve instead of coming, and faith cannot serve in the place of baptism. None are justified but those who are grafted into the justified body; and faith is not an instrument of grafting, but a title to be grafted. It is baptism, "whereby, as an instrument, they that receive it rightly," that is, by faith, "are grafted into the Church." And *with*

the Church go all its privileges ; and on *communion* with it depends the *inflowing* into the soul of its privileges. He who never has entered into the Church has not the privileges ; he who has seceded from it, or sinned grievously in it, or is born in a schismatical branch or heretical sect, to him the privileges are suspended. There are great numbers, then, all about us, vast multitudes, who, for one reason or other, through their own fault or the fault of their fathers, are in a position which fails of the enjoyment of the privileges of regeneration. The power of the Spirit, the cleanness and lustre of the new creature, the intercourse with heaven, the light of God's countenance, the fulness of justification, are not participated by these masses of men, according to the provisions of the Gospel covenant. But in spite of this, we may humbly, yet confidently say, that where there is true faith, there justification shall be ; there it is promised, it is due, it is coming, somehow, somewhile. Whether, as the Saints of the Old Testament waited, and were not gifted with Gospel justification till Christ's first coming, these faithful souls will be received into the glory and grace of the Church at His second coming ; or whether they enter into the kingdom upon death ; or whether, by an extraordinary dispensation unknown to us and to themselves, they receive the gift here ; or whether in this world their eyes shall at length be opened, and the Church revealed to them, as the true treasure-house of grace and home of refuge to all believers, and they led to seek it, and renounce the sect of their birth or of their choice,—any how, they have a title ; if they call, they shall be answered,—if they knock, it shall be opened to them. *Who* have this true faith we cannot tell, any more than *when* God rewards it ; no, nor what measure of assistance, what power of spiritual influence He gives to those, who yet, like the Jews, have not the peculiar gifts and endowments of the Covenant of the Gospel. Yet it is a great comfort to believe that God's favour is not limited to the bounds of His heritage, but that, in the Church or out of the Church, every one that calleth on the Name of the Lord with a pure and perfect heart shall be saved.

And thus the possession of the Holy Scriptures is an inestimable gift in a country, to those who use it rightly, whether they belong to the Church or not, and we may well rejoice in their circulation ; not that possession justifies, or reading, or knowing ; not that the Bible is our *religion*, according to the strange phrase, which however has, alas, too true a meaning in fact ; but the Bible is the means, through God's secret help, towards faith, and faith is the means towards justification. And as reading does not involve faith, yet is the way to it, so faith, though it does not involve justification, yet is a sure title to it. And thus by reading Scripture, thousands, we may trust, who are not bap-

tized, yet are virtually catechumens, and in heart and spirit *candidates* for the cleansing Sacrament. Thousands who are in unconscious heresy or unwilling schism, still are, through faith, in the state of Cornelius, when his prayers and alms went up before God. Thousands who are obliged to partake of the elements of Holy Communion unconsecrated, or administered with doubtful rites, yet have that within them which the fault or ignorance of the minister cannot take away,—a preparation of heart. Thousands who are in branches of the Church which profane men have stripped of holy ordinances, though the Sacraments themselves remain to it, may through their faith receive *in* the Sacraments those graces besides, which were wont to be given through those lost ordinances. And thousands who have been born and trained in separation, become through their faith divinely enlightened to seek and to join that One Holy and Catholic Body, in which God's presence abides. Such is the power of faith, not to disparage *ordinances*, but to secure *graces*.

Lastly, at the same time it is plain, and the face of Christendom shows it, how mournful is that spiritual state, even though happy in the end, in which, contrary to Christ's will, faith is disjoined from justification. Christ willed that justification should come at once upon faith through the Sacrament of Baptism. Satan has so disordered Christendom, that numbers perhaps have faith without as yet having justification; an interval, not of days, as in Cornelius's case, but of years, nay, perhaps of a life, lying between the two. We see the consequence of such an anomalous state all around us. How miserable is the inconsistency of even our good men! how excellent in some points, how very faulty in others! How clear and edifying seems the faith of many who yet are very poorly advanced in sanctification! how is faith (strange to say) combined with profaneness, or with pride, or with despondency, or with headstrong blindness to the truth! What does all this but show that God's spirit indeed is striving among us, but that the Church of the living God is hardly here; that beams of His favour are shed on us, but that the Sun of Righteousness is hid; that He has hid His face; that we have aids, but not Gospel graces; signs and evidences of mercy, but not justification; faith producing such fruits as it best may in the wide world, in a wild uncertain way, just as sweet plants might flower, and rich trees bear, on the outside of Eden.

But let *us* bless and praise God, my brethren, that He has placed *us*, as we trust, *within* the bounds of His kingdom; let us pray Him that we may avail ourselves of this inestimable privilege; let us pray Him to bring all others into it, to give light where He gives faith, and to join to the city of the Living God all those whose faces are turned thitherward.

SERMON XIII.

JUDAISM OF THE PRESENT DAY.

HEBREWS xi. 13.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embrace them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

WHAT St. Paul here plainly states is a paradox to many persons of this day, viz. that any should have faith, and yet should not have the promise. Yet the whole of this chapter is about the faith of the old fathers; and again and again in the course of it does he deny them the object of their faith. "They died in *faith*," yet "not having received the promises," "being persuaded of them and embracing them," yet only "seeing them afar off," and "confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau:" concerning what? "about things to come." Again he says, "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." And observe in the text the strong words, "persuaded of them, and *embraced them*;" in modern language, their faith *apprehended* the promise, yet they had it not. It is one thing, then, to have faith, another thing to receive the promise through faith. Faith does not involve in itself the receipt of the promise.

It is equally clear *what* the promise is which is spoken of,—regeneration. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,"—thus was it announced in the prophets,—“After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My *Law* in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.” Again, “I will pour My *Spirit* upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring.” And again, “A *new heart* also will I give you, and a *new spirit* will I put within you . . . And I will put My *Spirit* within you.” Accordingly, when our Lord was going away, He said to His Apostles, “Behold, I send the *promise* of My Father upon you.” Again, “Wait for the *promise* of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me.” And hence, when the multitude asked St. Peter what to do, he said, “Repent, and be *baptized* . . . for the re-

mission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the *Holy Ghost*, for the *promise* is unto you, and to your children." And St. Paul, in like manner, says that we receive "the *promise* of the *Spirit* through *faith*." Soon after he speaks of "the *promise* by *faith* of Jesus Christ."* Elsewhere he speaks of our being "sealed with that *Holy Spirit* of *promise*."

It appears, then, that faith gains the promise, and that the promise is the great gift of the Spirit; and moreover, (from the instance of the old Fathers, spoken of in the chapter from which the text is taken,) that it is not the same thing to have faith, so as to embrace and apprehend the promise, and to enjoy it; that faith is a condition of grace, and yet not a guarantee. A man may have true faith, and still not yet be justified; he may have a faith for justification, he may be ordained unto justification, yet the time of justification not yet have arrived; or, rather, though justification is not yet his, still in God's secret counsels he may be ordained unto it.

This doctrine seems to me a very consolatory one at this time, when so many persons have not, or have not certainly, the grant of justifying grace. When we consider that baptism of water is solemnly connected with regeneration by our Lord, and that such numbers among us either are not baptized at all, or in such a way, or by such persons, or under such circumstances, as to make it very doubtful whether it is real efficacious baptism or no, it is a great consolation to believe, that though they are *not* new-born and justified, yet they may have faith, as the old saints had, who were not justified in the Spirit; and that if they have faith, even though they be not justified to the day of their death, they are but in the condition of the old believers; and He who allowed the latter to die without receiving the promise, He who justified martyrs of old time, not through baptism, but in their streaming blood, may at the moment of death, or before death, should it so please Him, justify them too, even though unbaptized, in His own secret way. This, of course, allows no one to slight baptism when he can obtain it, nor to quench the whispers of grace within him, suggesting to him the necessity of baptism; nor does it warrant us rashly to assert that this or that unbaptized person has true faith, much less that he is justified; nor to suppose that such persons as are in a measure accepted without baptism, would not have a much higher acceptance with it; but it comforts us with the thought, that *if* a man has faith, he has or will have justification. Sooner would an Angel descend from heaven, or an Apostle be provided, than one, whose prayers and alms had gone up

* Jer. xxxi. 33; Isa. xlv. 3; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27; Luke xxiv. 49; Acts i. 4. Acts ii. 38, 39; Gal. iii. 14. 22; Eph. i. 13.

before God, should not, at one time or another, receive the gift. Almighty God has declared the immutability of His counsel to the heirs of promise; that whom He calls, them He justifies; whom He justifies, them He glorifies. The when and the where are with Him. He will do it in His time; as, according to His will, sooner or later, He takes from earth and brings into paradise those whom He has justified, so, sooner or later, does He translate from the world into the Church, through His Spirit, those whom He has called by faith. But it is not for us "to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power."*

Now there can be no doubt that Christ meant no length of time to interfere between faith and the cleansing and justifying new birth. A long and dreary interval had intervened in past ages, but that was over. St. Peter's words are sufficient to show this, "Repent *and* be baptized," or our Lord's, "He that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved."† So is the history of Cornelius, to whom regeneration was conveyed by a series of miracles; and still, nevertheless, in Cornelius's instance, some interval there was; and thus in the case of Cornelius and of the Jews we have specimens given us, at least in kind, of that long and miserable delay which so often occurs now, when the times of the Law seem to have returned, and men believe and embrace what they die without possessing.

Now if we have in various ways gone back unwittingly to the state of the Law; if without our fault, being falsely educated, or for other reasons, we have rested on faith solely, in an unscriptural way, and neglected God's ordinances; if we have remained without baptism, or not been confirmed, or not been frequent at the Lord's Table, or fallen away to religious bodies where that sacred rite cannot be administered, or in any way been deprived of that full circle of privileges which Holy Church dispenses; if we have thus been at disadvantage in one or other way, and yet are not without faith; if, I say, we have fallen into a Jewish *state*, it might be expected that we should display also a Jewish *character of mind*, and *course of conduct*, and should exemplify in ourselves that paradox which we so wonder at when recorded of the Jews in the text,—embracing promises which we do not or do but partially enjoy; and we are, I think, in such circumstances, as I now proceed to show.

If the Jews had not received the promised Spirit, it is not wonderful that they did not show forth the special fruits of that Spirit which was promised. Now the office of the promised Spirit was to mortify the flesh, to write the law in our hearts, to enable us to fulfil the righteous-

* Acts. i. 7.

† Acts ii. 38. Mark xvi. 16.

ness of the law, to pour into our hearts "that most excellent gift of love," to enable us to do works acceptable to God, and to be conformed in body, soul, and spirit to Him. The Jews were aided by God's grace, (else they could not have had faith,) but they were not inhabited by it; they did good actions, they had holy desires and tempers, but they had not that regenerate life within them which Christians are promised. I am not speaking of this or that highly-favoured saint, but of the people; they were at best great now, and little again; in some points high, and in others low; with one grace, and not another. Some graces they had, because they had faith; all they had not, because they had not the Indwelling Spirit. This is seen in some of the instances of faith given by St. Paul in the chapter immediately before us. For instance, he says, "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not;" and what is still more to the purpose, he refers to Samson and Jephthah as examples of true and acceptable faith; yet is the history of these men, particularly of Samson, *consistent* with their faith? Nay, did we possess merely the Old Testament, and knew not of St. Paul's inspired comment upon it, should we say that Samson had faith at all? See what it is to be in that middle state between faith and justification of the Spirit, between title and possession. And hence it has been the belief of many, that the old Fathers did not, after departing this life, at once enjoy the blessed rest of a justified people, till Christ came, and, having overcome death and risen again, gave them to be justified by that faith, with which they had long waited for Him, and to become members of His spiritual kingdom.

Again, the Apostle says, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land." Now this is said of that people "whose carcases fell in the wilderness," and who could not enter into the promised land;—why? "because of *unbelief*," as St. Paul tells us in the same Epistle. Here, you see, even their faith failed them. How different is it with the faith of Christ's disciples! "Simon, Simon," said our Lord to St. Peter, "behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith *fail not*."* Peter had before this been commended for his faith, and now it was in jeopardy; but in truth it was not from flesh and blood, it was attended with the beginnings of those Gospel gifts which the Jews had not; and which are "without repentance," for they are as inward habits, and He who begins a good work in us, in His mercy carries it forward to an end.

Again; St. Paul, in his own case, gives us an account of the state of the Jews, whose faith was not supported, strengthened, spiritualized by the gift of inward justification. "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal,

* Luke xxii. 31, 32.

sold under sin ; for that which I do, I allow not ; for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death !” How different this from St. John’s description of the true regeneration ; “ Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His *seed* remaineth in him”—what is that seed but the Spirit ?—“ His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”*

Such is the case of those who have faith, yet are not yet justified with the grace of the Gospel ; and may we not, with all reverence to so great and holy a prophet, say this in a measure even of David ? Surely it is no irreverence to speak of what he seems to have been in the flesh, if we think that now he is with Christ in the spirit, in the lot of the blessed, and the light of the justified, though in his earthly life the fullness of that gift had not yet been accorded to him. Surely it is no irreverence to speak of what he was before he had received the promise, now that he has received it, more than to speak of what St. Paul was when he was Saul. Nay, far less, if we may talk of less where there is none. For St. Paul was even under God’s displeasure before he was Christian ; but David was the man after God’s own heart, and an inspired prophet. His Psalms are our portion even to this day. We reverence him as one who was favoured on earth, and destined to be more favoured in heaven. We see in him much actually secured, though we allow that much was but in promise. And therefore even we, without blame may notice, and profitably consider, the imperfections of holy David’s life in this point of view, *viz.* as showing the state in which men are found when they have faith, but have not yet received the promise. Consider, then, the high excellences of his character ; view him leading the worshippers to the house of God ; think of his zeal for God’s service ; his lofty devotional spirit ; the tenderness and the piety of his thoughts ; his dutifulness to God’s commands ; his humility, simplicity, generosity, nobleness, and affectionateness ; and then, on the other hand, view him in those particular passages of his history which inspiration records for our instruction, and you will, I think, see by the instance even of so great a light, what the case was with the multitude, who, however inferior to him in gifts and graces, had faith, yet had not yet gospel justification.

And now, after these remarks on the state of the Jews, let me ask you to turn to the present state of this country, and to say whether numbers are not, by their own confession, in that same Jewish state ; and therefore whether it is not true of them, as of the Jews, in a cer-

* Rom. vii. 14, 15, 24. 1 John iii. 9.

tain sense, that, granting they have faith, and it is a consolation to believe they have, yet they are at best, in matter of fact, in that intermediate, provisional, unspiritual state in which *we* view them, who hold that the sacraments of the Church are over and above faith necessary for justification.

If, I say, justification is conveyed through Baptism and the other sacred rites, those who reject the latter, either have not received, or have lost the former. But on the other hand, if true faith gives men a title to be justified, then they will be justified in God's own time, provided their faith endure. Such, then, being the state of good men who, from involuntary ignorance, are in dissent, or in other grievous ecclesiastical error, do they not, I say, stand exactly in the state of the Jews? Certainly; for the Jews had faith, yet had not yet received the promise of the Spirit, which is Christian justification. Well then, I repeat, if this be so, we should expect that their *opinions and lives* would actually *show* that they *were* in a Jewish state. This is what I am now insisting on. I have said what the state of the Jews was, moral and spiritual, and now I am going to show that just in that state, and in no other, according to their own confession, are Christians now, who neglect the justifying ordinances of the Church. And,

1. Great numbers absolutely confess and believe, that the Christian ordinances are just the same as the Jewish. They *own* themselves to be in the state in which the Church lay before Christ suffered and rose again. They distinctly assert that Baptism is no more than circumcision. Thus they bear witness against themselves. They do not look for any high mysterious gift in Holy Communion, but they think it the same as the Jewish Passover; each, as they think, figures our Lord's passion; the difference being that, in the one case, it was yet to come, in the other it is past. The Passover prefigured, the Lord's Supper commemorates it; the Jews looked forward, Christians look back. This is what they hold. They *claim* to be in the state of the Jews, in the state of those who had faith, but had not gospel justification.

2. Next, let it be observed, that they consider justification to be nothing more than God's *accounting* them righteous, which is just what justification was to the Jews. Justification *is* God's accounting a man righteous; yes, but it is in the case of the Christian something more; it is God's *making* him righteous too. As beasts live, and men live, and life is life, and yet life is not the same in man and beast; but in man consists in the presence of a soul; so in somewhat the same way Jews were justified, and Christians are justified, and in the case of both justification means God's accounting men righteous; but in Chris-

tians it means not only an accounting, but it involves a making ; so that as the presence of a soul is the mode in which God makes man live, so the presence of the Holy Spirit is the mode in which God makes him just. This is that promise of the Spirit of life, because of which the Gospel is called "a ministration of righteousness." But the multitude of religious professors at this day whom I speak of, do not admit this ; they even protest against the notion. They think justification to be something, not inward, but merely outward ; that is, they acknowledge themselves, they claim to be, in the state of the Jews, and though of course they contend that they *are* justified, yet they own that their own justification is not more than an outward or imputative justification. There is no room here for difference in the use of words, and mutual misunderstandings. If we maintain that they have not inward justification, it is not as if they maintained that they had, as if they aspired to it ; it is no more than they allow as well as we. They only contend they are justified in *their* sense, that is, in such sense as we allow they may be, if they have true faith ; I mean in that sense in which the Jews were justified, who died, not having received the promise.

3. Again. They lay an especial stress upon *faith* for salvation, and comparatively neglect love ; they put faith *before* love. Now, is not this in so many words to assent to us when we place them with the Jews ? For, whereas faith is the essence of *all* religion, and of the Jewish inclusive, love is the great grace of Christianity ; Christianity is religion, and something more ; and the spirit of love is faith, any something more. *Christian* faith is faith developed into love, it lives in love, and love is greater than faith, because it is its Gospel perfection, according to the Apostle's declaration, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity." "The just shall live by faith," is a Jewish truth as well as a Christian ; "Love is the fulfilling of the Law," is Christian only. When these persons say that faith is all in all, what do they but allow that they are on a level with the Jews,—with those who had indeed faith, but had not yet attained the Christian promise ?

4. Again. The Jews, as I have said, had the will without the power ; whereas Christ has unfettered the will, and enabled it to obey. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead," He says. "The Law of the Spirit of Life hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* Christ, by fulfilling the Law for us, has given us also power to fulfil it after our measure, "who walk not after the flesh, but after

* Eph. v. 14. Rom. viii. 2.

the Spirit." The very test of a mature Christian, of a true saint, is consistency in all things. Now, is it not a very remarkable fact, that the bodies of men I speak of unhesitatingly appropriate that melancholy seventh chapter to the Romans, to which I have been referring, and claim it as being accurately descriptive of their own state. Nay, so strongly and earnestly, that sometimes they will even say that no one is, in their sense, a true Christian, who does not claim it also;—and why? because they say that, if a man does not find *is own experience* bear witness to the truth of the Apostle's statement in that chapter, he cannot possess that state of mind which they consider essential to all believers. O true confession to the misery of having faith without inward justification! They make the test of a true Christian to be, not spiritual perfection, but confession of sin. Thus they glory, I will not say in their shame, but in their misfortune. They are in bondage; they are carnal, sold under sin; they confess it; they are like the Jews, and they call this a spiritual mind, and say that none are true Christians but who are in a similar state. Do I mean to promise persons that they shall be at once and altogether free from their natural bondage if they follow Christ in His Church? Do I mean to say that we do not, as well as the Jews, in a certain sense recognise those miserable cries of human nature as our own? No, but I mean to say, that *so far* as we feel them, we too are in an inferior Jewish state; that there *is* a higher state, that we are bound to seek after it, and that we can attain to it. But the multitudes I speak of, *own* that their peculiar and intended condition, that state to which they give the name of spiritual, is one in which the Spirit has no power. Such is the consequence of starting with faith rightly, but stopping short of the Sacraments wrongly.

5. Once more. There is one virtue which of old time good men especially had not. Indulgences were allowed the Jews on account of the hardness of their hearts. Divorce of marriage was allowed them. More wives than one at once were not denied them. If there is one grace in which Christianity stands in especial contrast to the old religion, it is that of purity. Christ was born of a Virgin; He remained a virgin; His beloved disciple was a Virgin; He abolished polygamy and divorce; and He said that there were those who for the kingdom of heaven's sake would be even as He. Now, as the Apostle says "Every man hath his proper gift of God." I accept the word; I do not outstep it; but as surely as each has his gift, so, according to the Apostle, some have *this* gift. But now, my brethren, who will question that the way of the world at present is to deny that there is such a gift? I am not objecting here, I am not wondering, that all men

have it not ; but what I wonder at is, that *none* have it ; and, I ask, does not this, if there were no other reason, show that we have fallen back into a Jewish state ? It is now a recognised principle with the world, that there can be no certainty of holiness except in married life ; and that celibacy is all but a state of sin. Nay, so far has this gone, that some of the greatest masters of the doctrine of faith without love and sacraments, have actually sanctioned bigamy in particular cases, and advocated polygamy in writing. Too well then does that religion, which they promulgated, bear witness against itself, that, though faith still be among its followers, which I am far from denying, and have comfort in thinking, yet it is but the faith of Jews, who had a law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and who died indeed in faith, but without having received the promise.

To conclude, though it is our Church's blessedness to have withstood that torrent of error to which I have been referring, yet it could not be expected that her individual members should have kept themselves free from it. And in proportion as the acts of individuals can counteract her own intentions, so far doubtless we have suffered as others, and in no slight degree. It is our business, instead of exalting ourselves over others, to repent of our own sins, and to try to escape from the disadvantages under which we find ourselves after all. Especially should we turn our thoughts to the consideration of Holy Communion, which in ancient times used in many or most places to be celebrated daily, but now is celebrated commonly but three or four times a year. If that holy ordinance be the continual life of the Church, if the Jews "did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead," but if any man "eat of this bread he shall live for ever,"* is it wonderful that those of us who relinquish this Gospel gift, and rest in our faith for salvation, should fall back into a state like the Jews ? Is it wonderful that we who are the children of promise should not enjoy the promise, seeing we will not accept it ; seeing we think it enough to believe that we already have it, or that God offers it, and will not put out our hand to take it ? Is it wonderful that we have no command over ourselves, when we do not come to Christ, "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood ?" Is it wonderful that we are so inconsistent and variable, when we will not seek of Him such daily sustentances of grace as he offers to us ?—when we do not pray to Him daily, or seek His house daily ?—that day by day we may walk with Him, and not after our own hearts. Is it won-

* John vi. 51.

derful that we have no love, when we neglect altogether that great ordinance whereby love is nurtured, abstinence and fasting ?

We cannot hinder that others should thus act ; we cannot change the course of things, nor heal what is sick, nor bind up what is broken, at our will. But we can act for ourselves, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear , and, while we so act, they may oppose us, but, through God's grace, they will at length be moved to follow us, till at length He will fulfil in them "all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power."

SERMON XIV.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE APOSTLES.

MARK ix. 38, 39.

And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not ; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me.

PERSONS who choose their religion for themselves, or who wander about from one communion of Christians to another at their will, often urge upon us who wish to be disciples of the One Faith which was once delivered to the saints, this passage of Scripture. They say that Christians may follow strange teachers, who come in their way, because our Saviour did not allow St. John to hinder the stranger mentioned in the text from casting out devils in our Saviour's name. St. John came to Christ, and told Him that he and the other Apostles had fallen in with a man who, though he wrought miracles, yet did not follow the Apostles, and that they in consequence had forbidden him. To which our Lord answered, "Forbid him not." Therefore they argue, as the Apostles were not allowed to forbid this stranger, neither may the Church forbid strange teachers and preachers ; that all have a right to preach, whether they follow the Church or no, so that they do but

preach in the name of Jesus, without any molestation. Such is the objection, and I propose now to consider it.

Now I deny that the case in the text is at all parallel to that which it is brought to justify, as a few remarks will show.

1. First, then, this man was not preaching; he was casting out devils. This is a great difference—he was doing a miracle. Our Saviour says so expressly: “There is no man which shall do a *miracle* in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me.” Now any one can preach; not every one can cast out devils. Very few can cast out devils; nay, at first sight it would seem that none but a servant of God can cast out devils. *Man* cannot overcome the devil; Christ only overcomes him. If a man cast out a devil, he has power from Christ; and if he has power from Christ, he must have a commission from Christ; and who shall forbid one, to whom God gives commission to do miracles, from doing them? That would be fighting against God. But, on the other hand, many a man may preach without being sent from God and having power from Him; for Christ expressly warns us against false prophets, and He says that “Many shall come in His Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.” It does not follow, then, because we must not forbid those who come with a divine commission from working miracles, that therefore we may not forbid those who do not come with a commission from preaching.

2. But it may be said, “The effects of preaching *are* a miracle. A good preacher converts persons, that is, he casts out devils from the hearts of those whom he changes from sin to holiness; and this is a miracle. This he could not do without power from God. Therefore he is sent from God, and therefore he ought not to be forbidden. The question turns on this, whether his preaching is with power or not, whether he *is* influential, whether he touches the hearts of his hearers. If he does, no matter whether he follows the Apostles or not. For the Apostles were but messengers from God, and he is a messenger from God because he is able to do God’s work, and one messenger need not follow another messenger! What is Paul? or what is Apollos? He is as little bound to follow the Apostles, as the Apostles to follow him: he has just as much right to forbid the Church to preach, as the Church to forbid him. And since we may not forbid him, we may follow him.” This is what is said.

I answer, that though such a person’s preaching *were* all that it is said to be, though it did work what look like miracles, this would not prove that he came from God; for the false prophets against whom our Saviour warns us, are to do “signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were

possible, even the elect.”* I do not suppose that they will work miracles such as God’s servants work, but what seem to be such, what are sufficiently like miracles to perplex those who see them; yet these prophets, of course, are not to be listened to. And, therefore, if a preacher, who kept apart from the Church, were said to do much good to the souls of others, I should very much rejoice to hear the report of it, but I should pause and require many things to be decided first, before I could be sure that good really was done; or, if so, that it was his doing. What seems good, is often not good. Persons who hear preaching often take up a serious life for a time, and then get tired of it. Or they profess a great deal more than they feel; and think themselves more in earnest than they are; or they take that to be true religion which is not; or they change one bad state of mind for another, and account certain feelings, or tempers, or opinions, or doings to be pleasing to God, which are not so. For all these reasons it is not at all an easy matter to determine that the self-appointed preachers in question do really convert the hearts of men, that is, *do* cast out devils, do work miracles, as they say they do.

3. But again; even if sinners *are* converted upon such a one’s preaching, this would not show that *he* did the work, or, at least, that he had more than a share in it. The miracle after all might belong to the Church, not to him. If sinners are converted, it is partly in consequence of their having been baptized, and perhaps not owing to the preacher in question more than to any other accident. Men are touched, and roused to think of religion continually, by a variety of striking accidents, which God uses indeed, which He overrules for good, but which do not therefore necessarily come *from* Him. Supposing a man falls into sin, and that rouses his conscience, fills him with remorse, makes him fly to God for pardon, leads him to repentance and newness of life; all this comes from his having *committed* this particular sin, whatever it is, but who would say that the *sin* came from God? God forbid; the sin came from the man’s own self-will, and God mercifully overruled it to him for good; and, in like manner, God may condescend to overrule the preaching of those who preach at their own will, not from Him, without countenancing them thereby in so preaching. They are but the *occasion* of the miracle, not the *instrument* of it.

And let it be observed, that persons who take up with new religions, and leave the Church to follow preachers, often grant that they gained their *first* impression *in* the Church. Well, if so, the Church, as they

* Mark xiii. 22.

themselves say, has a share in the work wrought in them. The Church did part of the miracle. How many a man, who thinks he is converted by this or that preacher, gains the benefit after all from the parents or the clergyman who have taught him when young, and trained him up in holiness, though he did not profit by their instructions at the time, and who, now that he lives more religiously, ungratefully forgets *them*, and refers it all to some strange preacher, who, at the very farthest, did but put the finishing stroke to the work,—who led him to profit by what he had been already taught, who rekindled what once before was lighted, and who, perhaps, *in* rekindling deteriorates the flame, so that instead of being pure, serene, and heavenly, it smoulders, and is full of smoke, or blazes and sinks by fits and starts, or flares wildly and lights a conflagration.

For all these reasons, then, it would seem as if the instance in the text did not apply to persons who teach new religions now : we may forbid them, because they do not work miracles, as the man in the text did ; and even though they seemed in particular cases to convert the souls of their hearers, which would be a miracle, it would be very difficult to prove that they really have done this, both because what seems conversion often is not real conversion in spirit and truth ; and, again, because though it be real conversion, yet, perhaps, *they* are not the doers of it, but the Church itself before them. To proceed ;—

1. It should be observed, then, that if our Saviour says on this occasion, “He that is not against us is on our part,” yet elsewhere He says, “He that is not with Me is against Me.”* The truth is, while a system is making way against an existing state of things, help of any kind advances it ; but when it is established, the same kind of professed help tells against it. Before the Gospel was received, those who did not oppose the Apostles actually aided them ; when it was received, the very same parties interfered with them. Let us consider when our Saviour spoke the words in the text. It was at a time when there was *no* Church, when He had not yet set up His Church ; we have no warrant, then, for saying, that because men might work in Christ’s name, without following the Apostles, before He had built His Church, and had made them the foundations of it, therefore such persons may do so lawfully since. He did not set up His Church and the Apostles in it till after His resurrection. When He spoke to St. John in the text, He had not given to St. John and the rest their commission ; even though the man who cast out devils had no commission, still the Apostles had none either. In this respect he was not inferior to St. John, who, though nearer to Christ, was not as yet His repre-

* Matt. xii. 30.

sentative. Our Lord had said to St. Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I *will* build My Church,"* it was still future ; but after His resurrection He founded it. Then He said to him, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me ? feed My lambs, feed My sheep."† In like manner He had said to all the Apostles before His resurrection, "Whatsoever ye *shall* bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ;" the time was not yet come ; but after it, He said, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you."‡ Then He *did*, what before He promised ; henceforth all men must join themselves to the Apostles, which they were not told to do before. Accordingly, we read in the second chapter of the Acts, that those who were converted and baptized, "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine,"—but not only doctrine, it was not enough to preach and hold the same doctrine as they, but it is added, to the Apostles' "fellowship,"—they "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship."|| That is, they *followed* the Apostles ; and if they had wished to depart from that fellowship, the Apostles would have *forbidden* it, nor would our Lord have said to them then, "Forbid them not."

Accordingly, when the Christians of Corinth went into parties, and set up forms of doctrine of their own, and neglected St. Paul their Apostle, what did he say ? did he *forbear* to forbid them ? no, he forbade them. And he gave this reason ; "What ?" he said, "came the word of God out from you ?"§ that is, did the word of God originate with you ? And in like manner we may say to those who set up a distinct sect or communion for themselves, "Where did you get your knowledge of the truth ? You may think the word of God came out from you, but really it came to you *from us* ; nor have you received what you teach, as far as it is true, except through that Church which you oppose. That Church made you what you are, as far as you are Christian ; and the Church that made you has a right to rule you, and to protest against you when you will not be ruled ; she has a right to bid you follow her, and to claim jurisdiction over you, for you are her's ; whereas the man in the text who cast out devils had not received the power through the Apostles, and therefore the Apostles had no claim on him to submit to them.

Afterwards, however, the Apostles were the sole channels of grace ; and as they were the sole grace-givers under Christ, so they were the sole governors, under Him, of all Christian people ; and as they transmitted life, so they claimed obedience. For instance, St. John the Baptist's disciples were believers, religious men, and in God's favour ;

* Matt. xvi. 18. † John xxi. 15—17. ‡ Matt. xviii. 18. John xx. 21.

|| Acts ii. 42. § 1 Cor. xiv. 36.

but, when once the Church was set up, they were obliged to submit to the Church, and to leave the sect, though divinely founded, to which they belonged. We read in the Acts of the Apostles of Apollos, "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures," who was "instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in the spirit, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."* All this availed, and was accepted with God, till He had set up His Church; but when once it was set up, it availed Apollos nothing, though eloquent, though scriptural, nay mighty in the Scriptures, though instructed in the Lord's way, though fervent in spirit, though diligent in speaking and teaching, and that boldly, though belonging to the sect and baptized with the baptism of him than whom, among those born of women, no prophet was greater. The Baptist had taught him true doctrine, had taught him that Christ was the Son of God, the Lamb of God, our Atoning Sacrifice; and this Apollos doubtless taught in turn. What did he not teach which persons now teach who call themselves especially gospel preachers? But as the Baptist submitted to Christ, so must the Baptist's followers submit to Christ's followers, Apollos to the Church. Apollos must not stand apart and so preach Him who taketh away the sin of the world; but he must come to them who alone could convey the Spirit; he must come for Christian Baptism, in spite of his knowledge of the Gospel. So Aquilla and Priscilla "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

Another instance is given us directly after, in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter. St. Paul found certain disciples who had been baptized into John's baptism. He told them this was not enough, and accordingly they were baptized in the *Name* of the Lord Jesus; and were next confirmed, and received the Holy Ghost, even His miraculous gifts. And here I would observe that, for what we know, the very man in the text was one of St. John's disciples, or, if not, one who had received his religious impressions from John; who might lawfully remain as he was, and cast out devils in the Name of Jesus, without joining the Apostles, *till* the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then he was bound to join *them*.

2. And here too we have light thrown upon an expression in the text which I have just used, and which at first sight may seem to need no explanation: "In My Name." Our Lord speaks of those who do miracles "in His Name." Now what is implied in this? At first sight we might think that every one who *uses* the Name of Jesus, and

* Acts xviii. 24, 25.

professes to work in and by it, *does* do what he does *in His Name*. But this is not so; as is plain from another part of the chapter already quoted, where we read of certain vagabond Jews, "who took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus." Here, then, were persons who did not follow the Apostles, using the Lord's Name; but could they in consequence be said really to *speak* in His Name? No; for what happened? The evil spirit whom they were attempting to expel, cast it in their teeth, that *they* did *not* follow the Apostles. He answered, "Jesus I know, and *Paul* I know," (I know the Apostle Paul,) "but who are ye?" And now, in like manner, the hosts of evil may say to those who preach without being sent, "Jesus I know, and the Church I know, but who are ye?"

Merely, then, to use the Name of Jesus is not enough to constitute what Scripture means by speaking in the Name of the Lord; we must look for that sacred Name, and use that sacred Name, *where* He has lodged it. His name is a Name of power; we must seek *where* He has lodged His power, if we would speak with power. He has not left His Name at large in the world, but He has lodged His Name in a secure dwelling-place; and we have that Name engraven on us only when we *are in* that dwelling place. For instance, you recollect the account of the Angel who led the Israelites out of Egypt into the land of promise, how God Almighty speaks of him, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, and provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for *My Name is in him*."* The Israelities were to go forward in the Name of the Lord; but it was not enough to use His Name, it was necessary to seek it *where* He had put that awful Name. He had lodged it with the Angel; and to be under the Name's protection, it was necessary to follow the Angel, and obey him. Again, when they came into the promised land, we find still that they might not take up any religion they chose, and use it in God's Name, but that they must seek and use the Name of God where He placed it; for Moses speaks thus to them, "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall *choose* out of all your tribes to put His Name there, even unto *His habitation* shall ye seek, and *thither* thou shalt come . . . Ye shall *not* do after all the things that we do here this day," that is in the wilderness; "every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you."* The Israelites in the wilderness were somewhat in the condition of Christ's

* Exod. xxiii. 20, 21.

† Deut. xii. 5, 8, 9.

followers before Christ had set up His Church, and put His Name there. Men might use His Name without following His Apostles then; but when once He had put His Name in the Church, then they were bound "unto His habitation to seek, and thither to come." And, that His Name, which was once placed in Shiloh and in Jerusalem, is now named upon the Church, is plain from the prophet Jeremiah, who first says, speaking of Christ, "This is His Name, whereby He shall be called," that is, under the Gospel; "The Lord our Righteousness,"* and next applies this special title to the Church, thus,—in his thirty-third chapter, "This is the Name whereby *she* shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." His Name is upon her; His Name is her Name. And hence the prophet Malachi, speaking of the Church Catholic, and its perpetual feast of bread and wine in Holy Communion, says, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, *My Name* shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto *My Name*, and a pure offering, for *My Name* shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts."† His Name is there, where is the predicted "pure offering."

On the whole, then, it would appear that the stranger in the text might use the name of Jesus without following the Apostles, because they, though Christ's Apostles, had not yet had the Name of Christ named upon them, in order to their forming together His Church; but that ever since His resurrection that Church has existed, and has borne His Name; and to use His Name except in and under the Church, is to treat His sacred Name irreverently, which whoso does, God will not hold him guiltless, unless he does it in ignorance; and then, though his work will perish, he will be saved, yet so as by fire.

And hence such earnest exhortations are given us by St. Paul against division and disobedience; for instance, "Mark them who cause divisions and offences which ye have learned, and avoid them;"‡ "Whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions; are ye not carnal?"|| "We command you that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us;" "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."‡

I have but one point more to dwell upon before I conclude. I have been showing what the text must *not* be taken to mean at this day. I have shown that it must not and cannot rightly be applied to countenance those who now set up against the Church; but the question arises, to

* Jer. xxiii. 6.

† Mal. i. 11.

‡ Rom. xvi. 17.

|| 1 Cor. iii. 3.

§ 2 Thess. iii. 6. Heb. xiii. 17.

what *does* it now apply? Every word of Christ has a meaning at all times; it is not enough to expose the wrong meaning, unless we expound the right also. This is just the reason why so much of Scripture is taken in a wrong sense, because orthodox men have been satisfied merely with refuting it, instead of giving it the right sense. The way to refute error is to preach truth: till we apply this text rightly, it will continue, in spite of all our refutations, to be applied wrongly. I proceed, then, to say a few words by way of showing the right explanation; and, in doing so, as it happens, I shall be enforcing from the text this very principle.

Let it be observed, then, *who* it was who was not to be forbidden to use the Name of Jesus, though he did not follow the Apostles. Not one who preached *false* doctrine, not one who opposed the Apostles, or interfered with them, or had separated from them. Nothing then can be inferred from the text, though we take it ever so literally, or apply it ever so exactly to the present times, nothing, I repeat it, can be inferred in favour of those who *separate* from the Church, who *set up against* the Church, or who *interfere* with it, and *trouble* it. But there are a number of persons to whom the text does more or less apply, and whom we ought to treat according to its spirit. There are a number of persons not members of the Church, who neither have themselves separated from it, nor oppose it, nor usurp its place, but who are more or less in the condition of the man in the text, "not following us," yet using the Name of Jesus. Many sects and parties in this country are of long standing; many men are born in them; many men have had no opportunities of knowing the truth. Again, it may so happen they are exerting themselves for the cause of Christ in places where the Church is unknown, or where it does not extend itself. And, moreover, it may so be they may have upon them many consolatory proofs of seriousness and earnestness, of a true love for Christ, and desire to obey Him, and not to magnify themselves. Here, then, our Lord seems to say, "Forbid them not in their preaching."

The greater part of the world is in heathen darkness; sectaries of various descriptions will be found sending out missions for the conversion of souls to Christ, into places whither the Church has not sent missionaries. Now we are not bound to support them, for this reason, because they do not hold the *whole* truth of the Gospel. But we are not to behave towards them in a hostile way; rather we ought to bless God for whatever they mean well, and pray Him that they may mean and act still better.

Or, again, even in a country into which the Church is sending missions, it seems the duty of those whom she sends thither, to be kind and

tolerant towards all Christian bodies who are labouring there in the same cause, *as far* as these latter do not actively interfere with her, or oppose her doctrine, which, alas ! will too often be the case. We are not bound to join them were their doctrine ever so like ours, any more than the Apostles were bound to follow the stranger who did not follow *them*, which no one will say ; but we are to suffer them to go their way, while we go ours.

And again ; even at home there are many parts of the country into which the Church has not duly come, and which perhaps owe what they have of the Gospel to the labours of sectaries. *Here* too, as is evident, we are bound to act very differently from what would be our duty in places where they had established themselves in the face of the Church, and against the Church ; and without going into details, it is evident that there is a sense in which our Lord's words in the text apply to *them*.

On the whole, then, I would say this ; when strangers to the Church preach great Christian truths, and do not oppose the Church, then, though we may not *follow* them, though we may not join them, yet we are not allowed to *forbid* them ; but in proportion as they preach what is in itself untrue, and do actively oppose God's great Ordinance, so far they are not like the man whom our Lord told His Apostles not to forbid.

But in all cases, whether they preach true doctrine or not, or whether they oppose us or not, so much we may learn, viz. that we must overcome them, not so much by refuting them, as by preaching *the truth*. As we are told to overcome evil with good, so must we overcome falsehood with truth ; and as in baptism the curse of Adam is removed by the incoming of divine grace, so in like manner the reign of heresy is put to flight, not by merely attacking *it*, but by the manifestation of the pure Gospel instead. Let us be far more bent on preaching our own doctrine than on refuting another's. Let us be far more set upon alluring souls into the right way than on forbidding them the wrong. Let us be like racers in a course, who do not impede, but try to outstrip each other. Let us outstrip others in our lives and conversation, "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report." Let us conquer by meekness, gentleness, forbearance, and perseverance. When the voice of error and strife is loud, let us keep silence ; let us not be unwilling to be triumphed over as blind and prejudiced persons, as bigots, or as fanatics, or as zealots, or to be called any other hard

names by the world. Let us forbid them not. God will avenge us in His own way and at His own time. The weak shall be strong, and the despised shall become honourable. "He shall make our righteousness as clear as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day. Leave off wrath and let go displeasure; fret not thyself, else shalt thou be moved to do evil. Hope thou in the Lord and keep His way, and He shall promote thee, that thou shalt possess the land. Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that shall bring a man peace at the last."*

S E R M O N X V .

R I S I N G W I T H C H R I S T .

COLOSSIANS iii. 1—3.

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

IN the Communion Service we are exhorted to "lift up our hearts;" we answer, "We lift them up unto the Lord,"—unto the Lord, that is, who is ascended on high; to Him who is not here, but has risen, appeared to His Apostles, and retired out of sight. To that ascended and unseen Saviour, who has overcome death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, this day and all days, but especially at this season, when we commemorate His resurrection and ascension, are we bound to rise in spirit after His pattern. Far otherwise, alas, is it with the many: they are entangled, nay, possessed and absorbed by this world, and they cannot rise because they have no wings. Prayer and fasting have been called the wings of the soul, and they who neither fast nor pray, cannot follow Christ. They cannot lift up their hearts

* Ps. xxxvii. 6. 8. 35. 38.

to Him. They have no treasure above, but their treasure, and their heart, and their faculties are all upon earth ; the earth is their portion, and not heaven.

Great, then, is the contrast between the many, and those holy and blessed souls, (and may we be in their company !) who rise with Christ, and set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth. The one are in light and peace, the others form the crowd who are thronging and hurrying along the broad way "which leadeth to destruction ;" "who" are in tumult, warfare, anxiety, and bitterness, or, at least, in coldness and barrenness of mind ; or, at best, in but a short-lived merriment, hollow and restless ; or altogether blind to the future. This is the case of the many ; they walk without aim or object, they live irreligiously, or in lukewarmness, yet having nothing to say in their defence. They follow whatever strikes them and pleases them ; they indulge their natural tastes. They do not think of forming their tastes and principles, and of rising higher than they are, but they sink and debase themselves to their most earthly feelings and most sensual inclinations, because these happen to be the most powerful. On the contrary, holy souls take a separate course ; they have risen with Christ, and they are like persons who have climbed a mountain and are reposing at the top. All is noise and tumult, mist and darkness below ; but on the mountain's top it is so very still, so very calm and serene, so pure, so clear, so bright, so heavenly, that to their sensations it is as if the din of earth did not sound below, and shadows and gloom were no where to be found.

And, indeed, the mountain's top is a frequent image in Scripture, under which the Almighty Spirit speaks to us of our calling in Christ. Thus, for instance, it was prophesied of the Christian Church, "that the mountain of the Lord's House should be established in the top of the mountains . . . and many people should go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord." And, in like manner, the Temple built by Solomon was upon a high place ; doubtless, among other reasons, which at first sight seem of an opposite nature, by way of showing us that religion consists in retiring from the world, and rising towards heaven. "He chose the tribe of Judah," says the Psalmist, "even the hill of Sion which He loved. And there He built His Temple on high."* I do not mean, of course, that a man can be religious who neglects his duties of this world ; but that there is an inner and truer life in religious men, beyond the life and conversation which others see, or, in the words of the text, their "life is hid with Christ in

* Isai. ii. 2, 3. Psalm lxxvii. 69, 70.

God." Christ, indeed, Himself worketh hitherto, as His Father worketh, and He bids us also "work while it is day;" yet, for all this, it is true that the Father and the Son are out of sight, that they have an ineffable union with each other, and are not in any dependence upon the mortal concerns of this world; and so we, in our finite measure, must live after Their divine pattern, holding communion with them, as if we were at the top of the Mount, while we perform our duties towards that sinful and irreligious world which lies at the foot of it.

The history of Moses affords us another instance of this lifting up of the heart to God, and that, too, represented to us under the same image. He went up to the Mount for forty days, and there he saw visions. And observe, he remained all this time without eating bread or drinking water. That miraculous fast was a lesson to us, how it is that we Christians are to draw near to God. But observe, again, while he was on the Mount, what was going on at the foot of it. *There* was the turbulence, the ungodliness, the sin of the world. His servant Joshua said, as they heard the noise of the shouting, "There is a noise of war in the camp:" but Moses said, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear."*

Our Saviour's history gives us another striking instance of this divine communion, and the troublesome world in contrast. When He ascended the Mount of Transfiguration with His three Apostles, on the summit all was still and calm as heaven. He appeared in glory; Moses and Elias with him; the Father's voice was heard: St. Peter said, "Master, it is good for us to be here." Then he and his brother Apostles felt that their life was hid with Christ in God. But when they came down the mountain, how the scene was changed! It was descending from heaven to the world. "When He came to His disciples," says the Evangelist, "He saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him, saluted Him." And He found that the Apostles were trying to cast out a devil, and could not. And then He spoke the word, conformable with Moses' deed, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."†

And again; we may even say that, when our Lord was lifted up on the Cross, then, too, He presented to us the same example of a soul raised heavenwards and hid in God, with the tumultuous world at its feet. The unbelieving multitude swarmed about the Cross, they that

* Exod. xxxii. 17, 18.

† Mark ix. 5. 14, 15. 29.

passed by reviled Him, and the scribes mocked Him. Meanwhile, He Himself was, amid His agony, in divine contemplations. He said, "Father, forgive them;" "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "It is finished;" "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." And as He was hid in God, so too, even at that awful moment, one was at His side gazing on Him, and hid in God with Him. The penitent thief said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom;" "and Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise."*

And much more on His resurrection was He withdrawn from this troublesome world, and at peace, as the Psalmist foretold it. "I have set My King upon My holy *hill* of Sion." "Ever since the world began hath Thy seat been prepared; Thou art from everlasting. The floods are risen, O Lord, the floods have lift up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty and rage horribly: but yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier."†

These passages may be taken as types, if not as instances, of the doctrine and precept which the text contains. Christ is risen on high, we must rise with Him. He is gone away out of sight, and we must follow Him. He is gone to the Father, we, too, must take care that our new life is hid with Christ in God. This was the gracious promise, which is signified in the prayer He offered before His passion for all His disciples, even to the end of the world. "Holy Father," He said, "keep through Thine own Name, those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as we are. . . . I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. . . . Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee; that they may be one in Us. . . . I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one. . . . that the love, wherewith Thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them."‡ Agreeably to this sacred and awful announcement, St. Paul speaks in the text and following verses; "If ye, then, be risen with Christ," he says, "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not, on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Mortify, therefore your members which are upon the earth."

It is then the duty and the privilege of all disciples of our glorified Saviour to be exalted and transfigured with Him; to live in heaven in

* Luke xxiii. 42, 43. † Psalm ii. 6; xciii. 3—5.

‡ John xvii. 11, 15, 16. 20, 21, 23, 26.

their thoughts, motives, aims, desires, likings, prayers, praises, intercessions, even while they are in the flesh ; to look like other men, to be busy like other men, to be passed over in the crowd of men, or even to be scorned or oppressed, as other men may be, but the while to have a secret channel of communication with the Most High, a gift the world knows not of ; to have their life *hid* with Christ in God. Men of this world live in this world, and depend upon it ; they place their happiness in this world ; they look out for its honours or comforts. *Their* life is not hid. And every one they meet they suppose to be like-minded. They think they can be *as* sure that every other man looks out for the things which they covet, as they can be sure he has the same outward appearance, the same make, a soul and body, eyes and tongue, hands and feet. They look up and down the world, and, as far as they see, one man is just like another. They know that a great many, nay, far the greater part are like themselves, lovers of this world, and they infer, in consequence, that all are such. They discredit the possibility of any other motives and views being paramount in a man but those of this world. They admit, indeed, that a man may be *influenced* by religious motives, but to be *governed* by them, to *live* by them, to own them as turning points, and primary and ultimate laws of his conduct, this is what they do not credit. They have devised proverbs and sayings to the effect that every man has his price ; that all of us have our weak side ; that religion is a beautiful theory ; and that the most religious man is only he who hides most skilfully from himself, as well as from others, his own love of the world ; and that men would not be men if they did not love and desire wealth and honour. And, in accordance with these views, they imputed all base and evil things to our Lord Himself, rather than believe Him to be what He said He was. They said He was a deceiver ; that He wished to make Himself a king ; that His miracles were wrought through Beelzebub. But He all the while, the Son of Man, was but in outward act sojourning here, and was in spirit in heaven. Follow Him into the wilderness during His forty days' fast, when He did neither eat nor drink ; or after the devil's temptation, when Angels came and ministered unto Him ; or go with Him up that mountain to pray, where, as I have already said, He was transfigured, and talked with Moses and Elias ; and you will see where He really was, and with whom, while He sojourned upon earth,—with Saints and Angels, with His Father, who announced Him as His beloved Son, and with the Holy Ghost, who descended upon Him. He was "the Son of Man which is in heaven," and "had meat to eat" which "others knew not of."

And such in our measure shall we be, both in the appearance and in

the reality, if we be His. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ;" but, as far as this world goes, we shall be of little account. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not."* Or, more than this, we may be perhaps ridiculed for our religion, despised, or punished; "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?"† Such is the condition of those who rise with Christ. He rose in the night, when no one saw Him; and we, too, rise we know not when nor how. No one scarcely knows anything of our religious history, of our turnings to God, of our growings in grace, of our successes, but God himself, who secretly is the cause of them.

In this way let us enjoy and profit by this holy season; Christ hath "died, yea, rather hath risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Wonderful things had taken place, while the world seems to go on as usual. Pontius Pilate thought himself like other governors. The Jewish rulers went on with the aims and the prejudices which had heretofore governed them. Herod went on in his career of sin, and having seen and put to death one prophet, hoped to see miracles from a second. They all viewed all things as of this world; they said, "to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant." They heard the news and saw the sights, and provided for the need of the moment, and forgot the thought of God. Thus men went on at the foot of the mount, and they cared not for what was on the summit. They did not understand that another and marvellous system, contrary to this world, was being carried on under the veil of this world. So it was then: so it is now. The world witnesses not the secret communion of the Saints of God, their prayers, praises, and intercessions. But *they* have the present privileges of saints, notwithstanding,—a knowledge, and a joy, and a strength, which they cannot compass or describe, and would not if they could. "O how plentiful is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; and that Thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in Thee, even before the sons of men." Are they in anxiety? "Thou shalt hide them privily by Thine own presence from the provoking of all men; Thou shalt keep them secretly in Thy tabernacle from the strife of tongues." Are they in disappointment? "Thou hast put gladness in their heart, since the time that their enemies' corn, and wine, and oil increased." Are they despised by the prosperous? "*They* have children at their desire," says another Psalm, "and leave the rest of their substance for their babes; but as for me, I will behold Thy

* 1 John i. 3; iii. 1.

† Matt. x. 25.

presence in righteousness, and when I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it." Are they in despondency? the Psalmist has provided them with a consolation: "Nevertheless, I am always by Thee, for Thou hast holden me by my right hand; Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and after that receive me with glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Are they in peril? "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty . . . a thousand shall fall beside Thee, and ten thousand at Thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh Thee." Thus there is fullness without measure for every need, to be found in Him with whom our life is lodged; there is enough to "satisfy us with the plenteousness of His house, who gives us to drink of His pleasures, as out of the river. For with Him is the well of life, and in His light shall we see light." So that they might fittingly cry out, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy name . . . who forgiveth all thy sin and healeth all thine infirmities; who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving-kindness; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle."*

All this, my brethren, I say is our portion, if we choose but to accept it. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall rise up in His holy place? Who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon Thy holy hill? Even he that leadeth an uncorrupt life, and doeth the thing that is right, and speaketh the truth from his heart. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek Him, even of them that seek thy face, O Jacob." Aspire, then, to be "fellow-citizens of the Saints and of the household of God." Follow their steps as they have followed Christ. Though the hill be steep, yet faint not, for the reward is great; and till you have made the trial, you can form no idea *how* great that reward is, or how high its nature. The invitation runs, "O taste, and see how gracious the Lord is." If you have hitherto thought too little of these things, if you have thought religion lies *merely* in what it certainly does consist in also, in filling your worldly station well, in being amiable, and well-behaved, and considerate, and orderly, but if you have thought it was nothing more than this, if you have neglected to stir up the great gift of God which is

* Psalm xxxi. 21, 22; iv. 8; xvii. 15, 16; lxxiii. 22—25; xci. 1—7; xxxvi. 8, 9; ciii. 1. 3—5.

lodged deep within you, the gift of election and regeneration, if you have been scanty in your devotions, in intercession, prayer, and praise, and if, in consequence, you have little or nothing of the sweetness, the winning grace, the innocence, the freshness, the tenderness, the cheerfulness, the composure of the elect of God, if you are at present really deficient in praying, and other divine exercises, make a new beginning henceforth. Start now, with this holy season, and rise with Christ. See, He offers you His hand ; He is rising ; rise with Him. Mount up from the grave of the old Adam ; from grovelling cares, and jealousies, and fretfulness, and worldly aims ; from the thralldom of habit, from the tumult of passion, from the fascinations of the flesh, from a cold, worldly, calculating spirit, from frivolity, from selfishness, from effeminacy, from self-conceit and high-mindedness. Henceforth set about doing what it is so difficult to do, but what should not, must not be left undone ; watch, and pray, and meditate, that is, according to the leisure which God has given you. Give freely of your time to your Lord and Saviour, if you have it. If you have little, show your sense of the privilege by giving that little. But, anyhow, show that your heart and your desires, show that your life is with your God. Set aside, every day, times for seeking Him. Humble yourself that you have been hitherto so languid and uncertain. Live more strictly to Him ; take His yoke upon your shoulder ; live by rule. I am not calling on you to go out of the world, or to abandon your duties in the world, but to redeem the time ; not to give hours to mere amusement or society, while you give minutes to Christ ; not to pray to Him only when you are tired, and fit for nothing but sleep ; not to omit altogether to praise Him, or to intercede for the world and the Church ; but in good measure to realize honestly the words of the text, to "Set your affections on things above ;" and to prove that you are His, in that your heart is risen with Him, and your life hid in Him.

S E R M O N X V I .

WARFARE THE CONDITION OF VICTORY.

LUKE xxiv. 52, 53.

And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

FOR forty days after His resurrection did our Saviour Christ endure to remain below, at a distance from the glory which He had purchased. The glory was now His, He might have entered into it. Had He not had enough of earth? what should detain Him here, instead of returning to the Father, and claiming His throne? He delayed in order to comfort and instruct those who had forsaken Him in the hour of trial. A time had just past when their faith had all but failed, even while they had His pattern before their eyes; and a time, or rather a long period was in prospect, when heavier trials far were to come upon them, yet He was to be withdrawn. They hitherto understood not that suffering is the path to glory, and that none sit down upon Christ's throne, who do not first overcome, as He overcame. He stayed to impress upon them this lesson, lest they should still misunderstand the Gospel and fail a second time. "Ought not Christ," He said, "to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" And having taught them fully, after forty days, at length He rose above the troubles of this world. He rose above the atmosphere of sin, sorrow, and remorse, which broods over it. He entered into the region of peace and joy, into the pure light, the dwelling-place of Angels, the courts of the Most High, through which resound continually the chants of blessed spirits and the praises of the Seraphim. There He entered, leaving His brethren in due season to come after Him, by the light of His example, and the grace of His Spirit.

Yet, though forty days was a long season for Him to stay, it was but a short while for the Apostles to have Him [among them. What feeling must have been theirs, when He parted from them? So late found, so early lost again. Hardly recognised, and then snatched away. The history of the two disciples at Emmaus was a figure or

picture of the condition of the eleven. Their eyes were holden that they should not know Him, while He talked with them three years ; then suddenly they were opened, and He forthwith vanished away. So had it been, I say, with all of them. "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip ?"* had already been his expostulation with one of them. They had not known Him all through His ministry. Peter, indeed, had confessed Him to be the Christ, the Son of the Living God ; but even he showed inconsistency and change of mind in his comprehension of this great truth. They did not understand at that time who and what He was. But after His resurrection it was otherwise : Thomas touched His hands and His side, and said, "My Lord and my God ;" in like manner, they all began to know Him ; at length they recognised Him as the Living Bread which came down from heaven, and was the Life of the world. But hardly had they recognised Him, when He withdrew Himself once for all from their sight, never to see them again, or to be seen by them on earth ; never to visit earth again, till He comes at the last day to receive all Saints unto Himself, and to take them unto their rest. "So, then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."† Late found, early lost. This, perhaps, was the Apostles' first feeling on His parting from them. And the like often happens here below. We understand our blessings just when about to forfeit them ; prospects are most hopeful just when they are most hopelessly clouded. Years upon years we have had great privileges, the light of truth, the presence of holy men, opportunities of religious improvement, kind and tender parents. Yet we knew not, or thought not of our happiness ; we valued not our gift ; and then it is taken away, just when we have begun to value it.

What a time must that forty days have been, during which, while He taught them, all His past teaching must have risen in their minds, and their thoughts then must have recurred in overpowering contrast to their thoughts now ; His manner of life, His ministry, His discourses, His parables, His miracles, His meekness, gravity, incomprehensible majesty, the mystery of His thoughts and feelings ; the agony, the scourge, the cross, the crown of thorns, the spear, the tomb ; their despair, their unbelief, their perplexity, their amazement, their sudden joy, their triumph. All this was in their minds ; and surely not the least at that awful hour, when He led His breathless followers out to Bethany on the fortieth day. "He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them." And it came to pass,

* John xiv. 9.

† Mark xvi. 19.

while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven.”* Surely all His history, all His dealings with them, came before them, gathered up in that moment. Then, as they gazed upon that divine countenance and that dreadful form, every thought and feeling they ever had had about Him came upon them at once. He had gone through His work ; theirs was to come, their work and their sufferings. He was leaving them just at the most critical time. When Elijah went up, Elisha said ; “ My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof.” With a like feeling, might the Apostles now gaze up into heaven, as if with the hope of arresting His ascent. Their Lord and their God, the light of their eyes, the stay of their hearts, the guide of their feet, was taken away. “ My beloved had withdrawn Himself and was gone. My soul failed when He spake ; I sought Him but I could not find Him ; I called Him, but He gave me no answer.”† Well might they use the Church’s words as now ; “ We beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless.” O Thou who wast so gentle and familiar with us, who didst converse with us by the way, and sit at meat with us, and didst enter the vessel with us, and teach us on the Mount, and bear the malice of the Pharisees, and feast with Martha, and raise Lazarus, art Thou gone, and shall we see Thee no more ? Yet so it was determined : privileges they *were* to have, but not the same ; and their thoughts henceforth were to be of another kind than heretofore. It was in vain wishing back what was past and over. They were but told, as they gazed, “ This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.”

Such are some of the feelings which the Apostles may have experienced on our Lord’s ascension ; but these are after all but human and ordinary, and of a kind which all of us can enter into : but other than these were sovereign with them at that solemn time, for upon the glorious Ascension of their Lord, “ they worshipped Him,” says the text, “ and returned to Jerusalem with *great joy*, and were continually in the Temple praising and blessing God.” Now how was it, that when nature would have wept, the Apostles rejoiced ? When Mary came to the sepulchre and found not our Lord’s body, she stood without at the sepulchre weeping, and the Angels said unto her, as Christ said after them, “ Woman, why weepest thou ?”‡ Yet, on our Saviour’s departure forty days afterwards, when the Angels would reprove the Apostles, they did but say, “ Why stand ye gazing up into heaven ?” There was no sorrow in the Apostles, in spite of their loss, in spite of the prospect

* Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

† Cant. v. 6.

‡ John. xx. 15.

before them, but "great joy," and "continual praise and blessing." May we venture to surmise that this rejoicing was the high temper of the brave and noble-minded, who have faced danger in idea and are prepared for it? Moses brought out of Egypt a timid nation, and in the space of forty years trained it to be full of valour for the task of conquering the promised land; Christ in forty days trains His Apostles to be bold and patient instead of cowards. "They mourned and wept" at the beginning of the season, but at the end they are full of courage for the good fight; their spirits mount high with their Lord, and when He is received out of their sight, and their own trial begins, "They return to Jerusalem with great joy and are continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God."

For Christ surely had taught them what it was to have their treasure in heaven; and they rejoiced, not that their Lord was gone, but that their hearts had gone with Him. Their hearts were no longer on earth, they were risen aloft. When He died on the Cross, they knew not whither He was gone. Before He was seized, they had said to Him, "Lord, whither goest Thou? Lord, we know not whither Thou goest?" They could but follow Him into the grave and there mourn, for they knew no better; but now they saw Him ascend on high, and in spirit, they ascended with Him. Mary wept at the grave because she thought enemies had taken Him away, and she knew not where they had laid Him. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* Mary had no heart, for her treasure was lost; but the Apostles were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God, for their hearts were in heaven, or, in St. Paul's words, they "were dead, and their life was hid with Christ in God."

Strengthened, then, with this knowledge, they were able to face those trials, which Christ first underwent Himself, and foretold as their portion. "Whither I go," He had said to Peter, "thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." And He told them, "They shall put you out of the synagogues, yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."† That time was now coming, and they were able to rejoice in what so troubled them forty days before. For they understood the promise, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."‡

It will be well if we take this lesson to ourselves, and learn that great truth from which the Apostles shrank from at first, but at length rejoiced in. Christ suffered, and entered into joy; so did they, in their meas-

* Matt. vi. 21.

† John xvi. 2.

‡ Rev. iii. 21.

ure, after Him. And in our measure, so do we. It is written, that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." God has all things in His own hands. He can spare, He can inflict : He often spares, (may He spare us still !) but He often tries us,—in one way or another He tries every one. At some time or other of the life of every one there is pain, and sorrow, and trouble. So it is ; and the sooner perhaps we can look upon it as a law of our Christian condition, the better. One generation comes, and then another. They issue forth and succeed like leaves in spring ; and in all, this law is observable. They are tried, and then they triumph ; they are humbled, and then are exalted ; they overcome the world, and then they sit down on Christ's throne.

Hence St. Peter, who at first was in such amazement and trouble at his Lord's afflictions, bids us not look on suffering as a strange thing, "as though some strange thing happened to us, but *rejoice*, inasmuch as we are *partakers* of Christ's sufferings ; that when His glory shall be revealed, we may be glad also with exceeding joy." Again St. Paul says, "We glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." And again, "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And again, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." And St. John, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."* What is here said of persecution will apply of course to all trials, and much more to those lesser trials which are the utmost which Christians have commonly to endure now. Yet I suppose it is a long time before any one of us recognises and understands that his own state on earth is in one shape or other a state of trial and sorrow ; and that if he has intervals of external peace, this is all gain, and more than he has a right to expect. Yet how different must the state of the Church appear to beings who can contemplate it as a whole, who have contemplated it for ages,—as the Angels ! We know what experience does for us in this world. Men get to see and understand the course of things, and by what rules it proceeds ; and they can foretell what will happen, and they are not surprised at what does happen. They take the history of things as a matter of course. They are not startled that things happen in one way, not in another ; it is the rule. Night comes after day ; winter after summer ; cold, frost, and snow, in their season. Certain illnesses have their appointed times, or visit at certain ages. All things go through a process,—they have a beginning and an end. Grown men know this, but it is otherwise with

* 1 Pet. iv. 13. Rom. v. 3. 2 Tim. ii. 12. 1 John iii. 1, 2.

children. To them everything that happens is strange and surprising. They by turns feel wonder, admiration, or fear at everything that happens; they do not know whether it will happen again or not; and they know nothing of the regular operation of causes, or the connection of those effects which result from one and the same. And so too as regards the state of our souls under the covenant of mercy; the heavenly hosts, who see what is going on upon earth, well understand, even from having seen it often, what is the course of a soul travelling from hell to heaven. They have seen, again and again, in numberless instances, that suffering is the path to peace; that they that sow in tears shall reap in joy; and that what was true of Christ is fulfilled in a measure in His followers.

Let us try to accustom ourselves to this view of the subject. The whole Church, all elect souls, each in its turn, is called to this necessary work. Once it was the turn of others, and now it is our turn. Once it was the Apostles' turn. It was St. Paul's turn once. He had all cares on him at once; covered from head to foot with cares, as Job with sores. And, as if all this were not enough, he had a thorn in the flesh added,—some personal discomfort ever with him. Yet he did his part well,—he was as a strong and bold wrestler in his day, and at the close of it was able to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."* And after him, the excellent of the earth, the white-robed army of Martyrs, and the cheerful company of Confessors, each in his turn, each in his day, likewise played the man. And so down to this very time, when faith has well nigh failed, first one and then another have been called out to exhibit before the Great King. It is as though all of us were allowed to stand around His Throne at once, and He called on first this man, and then that, to take up the chant by himself, each in his turn having to repeat the melody which his brethren have before gone through. Or as if we held a solemn dance to His honour in the courts of heaven, and each had by himself to perform some one and the same solemn and graceful movement at a signal given. Or as if it were some trial of strength, or of agility, and, while the ring of bystanders beheld and applauded, we in succession, one by one, were actors in the pageant. Such is our state;—Angels are looking on,—Christ has gone before,—Christ has given us an example, that we may follow His steps. He went through far more, infinitely more, than we can be called to suffer. Our brethren have gone through much more; and they seem to encourage us by their success, and to sympathize in our essay. Now it is our turn;

* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

and all ministering spirits keep silence and look on. O let not your foot slip, or your eye be false, or your ear dull, or your attention flagging! Be not dispirited; be not afraid; keep a good heart; be bold; draw not back;—you will be carried through. Whatever troubles come on you, of mind, body, or estate; from within or from without; from chance or from intent; from friends or foes;—whatever your trouble be, though you be lonely, O children of a heavenly Father, be not afraid! quit you like men in your day; and when it is over, Christ will receive you to Himself, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Christ is already in that place of peace, which is all in all. He is on the right hand of God. He is hidden in the brightness of the radiance which issues from the everlasting Throne. He is in the very abyss of peace, where there is no voice of tumult or distress, but a deep stillness,—stillness, that greatest and most awful of all goods which we can fancy,—that most perfect of joys, the utter, profound, ineffable tranquillity of the Divine Essence. He has entered into His rest.

O how great a good will it be, if, when this troublesome life is over, we in our turn also enter into that same rest! If the time shall one day come, when we shall enter into His tabernacle above, and hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings; if we shall be in the number of those blessed dead who die in the Lord, and rest from their labour. Here we are tossing upon the sea, and the wind is contrary. All through the day we are tried and tempted in various ways. We cannot think, speak, or act, but infirmity and sin are at hand. But in the unseen world, where Christ has entered, all is peace. There is the eternal Throne, and a rainbow round about it, like unto an emerald; and in the midst of the throne the Lamb that has been slain, and has redeemed many people by His blood: and round about the throne four-and-twenty seats for as many elders, all clothed in white raiment, and crowns of gold upon their heads. And four living beings full of eyes before and behind. And seven Angels standing before God, and doing His pleasure unto the ends of the earth. And the Seraphim above. And withal, a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”* “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” “There is no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither any more pain; for

* Rev. vii. 14.

the former things are passed away.”* Nor any more sin; nor any more guilt; no more remorse; no more punishment; no more penitence; no more trial; no infirmity to depress us; no affection to mislead us; no passion to transport us; no prejudice to blind us; no sloth, no pride, no envy, no strife; but the light of God’s countenance, and a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne. That is our *home*; here we are but on pilgrimage, and Christ is calling us home. He calls us to His many mansions, which He has prepared. And the Spirit and the Bride call us too, and all things will be ready for us by the time of our coming. “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession;” seeing we have “so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight;” “let us labour to enter into our rest;” “let us come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”†

SERMON XVII.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

REVELATIONS xxii. 20.

He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

WHEN our Lord was going away, He said He would quickly come again; yet knowing that by “quickly” He did not mean what would be at first sight understood by the word, He added, “suddenly,” or “as a thief.” “Behold I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.”‡ Had His coming been soon, in our sense of the word, it could not well have been sudden. On servants who are bid to wait for their master’s return from an entertainment, that return, one should think, could not fall suddenly. It was because to

* Rev. xxi. 4.

† Heb. iv. 11. 14. 13; xii. 1.

‡ Rev. xvi. 15.

us His coming would not *seem* soon, that it *was* sudden. What you expect to come, you wait for; what fails to come, you give up; while, then, Christ said that His coming would be soon, yet by saying it would be sudden, He said that to us it would seem long.

Yet though to us He seem to delay, yet He has declared that his coming is speedy, He has bid us ever look out for His coming; and his first followers, as the Epistles show us, *were* ever looking out for it. Surely it is our duty to look out for it, as likely to come immediately, though hitherto for near two thousand years the Church has been looking out in vain.

Is there not something significant that, in the last book of Scripture, which more than any other implies a long continuance to the Christian Church, that there we should read such express and repeated assurances that Christ's coming should be speedy. Even in the last chapter we are told it three times. "Behold I come quickly; blessed is he that keepeth these sayings of the prophecy of this book." "Behold I come quickly and My reward is with Me." And again, in the text, "He that testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly." Such is the announcement; and, in consequence, we are commanded to be ever looking out for the great day, to "wait for His Son from heaven;"* to "look and haste unto the coming of the day of God."†

It is true, indeed, that in one place St. Paul cautions his brethren against expecting the immediate coming of Christ; but he does not say more than that Christ will send a sign immediately before His coming,—a certain dreadful enemy of the truth,—which is to be followed by Himself at once, and does not stand in our way, or prevent eager eyes from looking out for Him. And, in truth, St. Paul seems rather to be warning his brethren against being disappointed if Christ did not come, than hindering them from expecting Him.

Now it may be objected that this is a kind of paradox; how is it possible, it may be asked, ever to be expecting what has so long been delayed? What has been so long coming, may be longer still. It was possible, indeed, for the early Christians, who had no experience of the long period which the Church was to remain on earth, to look out for Christ; but we cannot help using our reason: there are no more grounds to expect Christ now than at those many former times, when, as the event showed, He did not come. Christians have ever been expecting the last day, and ever meeting with disappointment. They have seen what they thought symptoms of His coming, and peculiarities in their own times, which a little more knowledge of the world, a

* 1 THESS. i. 10.

† 2 PET. iii. 12.

more enlarged experience, would have shown them to be common to all times. They have been ever frightened without good reason, fretting in their narrow minds, and building on their superstitious fancies. What age of the world has there been in which people did not think the day of judgment coming? Such expectation has but evidenced and fostered indolence and superstition; it is to be considered as a mere weakness.

Now I shall attempt to say something in answer to this objection.

1. And first, considered as an objection to a habit of continual waiting, it (what is called) proves too much. If it is consistently followed up, no age ought ever to expect the day of Christ; the age in which He shall come (whatever it is) ought not to expect Him;—which is the very thing that He has warned us against. He no where warns us against what is contemptuously called superstition; but He expressly warns us against high-minded security. If it be true that Christians have expected Him when He did not come, it is quite as true that when He does come, the world will not expect Him. If it be true that Christians have fancied signs of His coming, when there were none, it is equally true that the world will not see the signs of His coming when they are present. His signs are not so plain but you have to search for them; not so plain but you may be mistaken in your search; and your choice lies between the risk of thinking you see what is not, and of not seeing what is. True it is, that many times, many ages, have Christians been mistaken in thinking they discerned Christ's coming; but better a thousand times think Him coming when He is not, than once think Him not coming when He is. Such is the difference between Scripture and the world; judging by Scripture, you would ever be expecting Christ; judging by the world, you would never expect Him. Now He must come one day, sooner or later. Worldly men have their scoff at our failure of discernment now; but whose will be the want of discernment, whose the triumph then? And what does Christ think of their present scoff? He expressly warns us by His Apostle, of scoffers, who shall say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation But beloved, (continues St. Peter,) be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day"*

It should be recollected, too, that the enemies of Christ have ever been expecting the downfall of his religion, age after age; and I do not see why the one expectation is more unreasonable than the other;

* 2 Pet. iii. 4—8.

indeed, they illustrate each other. So it is, undeterred by the failure of former anticipations, unbelievers are ever expecting that the Church and the religion of the Church are coming to an end. They thought so in the last century. They think so now. They ever think the light of truth is going out, and that their hour of victory is come. Now, I repeat, I do not see why it is reasonable to expect the overthrow of religion still, after so many failures ; and yet unreasonable, because of previous disappointments, to expect the coming of Christ. Nay, Christians at least, over and above the aspect of things, can point to an express promise of Christ, that He will one day come ; whereas unbelievers, I suppose, do not profess any grounds at all for expecting their own triumph, except the signs of the times. They are sanguine, because they seem so strong, and the Church of God seems so weak ; yet they have not enlarged their minds enough by the contemplation of past history to know that such apparent strength on the one side, and such apparent weakness on the other, has ever been the state of the world and the Church ; and that this has ever been one chief or rather the main reason, why Christians have expected the coming end of all things, because the prospects of religion *were* so gloomy. So that, in fact, Christians and unbelievers have taken precisely the same view of the facts of the case ; only they have drawn distinct conclusions from them, according to their creed. The Christian has said " All looks so full of tumult that the world is coming to an end ;" and the unbeliever has said, " All is so full of tumult, that the Church is coming to an end ;" and there is nothing, surely, more superstitious in the one opinion than in the other.

Now, when Christians and unbelievers thus unite in expecting substantially the same thing, though they view it differently, according to their respective modes of thought, there cannot be any thing very extravagant in the expectation itself ; there must be something ever present in the world which warrants it. And I hold this to be the case. Ever since Christianity came into the world, it has been, in one sense, going out of it. It is so uncongenial to the human mind, it is so spiritual, and man is so earthly, it is apparently so defenceless, and has so many strong enemies, so many false friends, that every age, as it comes, may be called " the last time." It has made great conquests, and done great works, but still it has done all, as the Apostle says of himself, " in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling,"* *How* it is that it is always failing, yet always continuing, God only knows who wills it,—but so it is ; and it is no paradox to say, on the one hand, that it has lasted eighteen hundred years, that it may last many years more, and

* 1 Cor. ii. 3.

yet that it draws to an end, nay, is likely to end any day. And God would have us give our minds and hearts to the latter side of the alternative, to open them to impressions *from* this side, *viz.* that the end is coming;—it being a wholesome thing to live as if *that* will come in our day which may come any day.

It was different during the ages before Christ came. *He* was to come. He was to bring perfection, and religion was to grow *towards* that perfection. There was a system of successive revelations going on, first one and then another; each prophet in his turn adding to the store of divine truth, and gradually tending towards the full Gospel. Time was measured out for unbelieving minds before Christ came, by the word of prophecy; so that He never could be expected in any age before the “fulness of time” in which He came. The chosen people were not bidden to expect Him at once; but after a sojourning in Canaan, and a captivity in Egypt, and a wandering in the wilderness, and judges, and kings, and prophets, at length seventy long weeks were determined to introduce Him into the world. Thus His delay was, as I may say, *recognised* then; and, *during* His delay, other doctrines, other rules, were given to fill the interval. But when once the Christ had come, as the Son over His own house, and with His perfect Gospel, nothing remained but to gather in His saints. No higher Priest could come,—no truer doctrine. The Light and Life of men had appeared, and had suffered, and had risen again; and nothing more was left to do. Earth had had its most solemn event, and seen its most august sight; and therefore it was the last time. And hence, though time intervene between Christ’s first and second coming, it is not *recognised* (as I may say) in the Gospel scheme, but is, as it were, on accident. For so it was, that up to Christ’s coming in the flesh, the course of things ran straight towards it, nearing it by every step; but now, under the Gospel, that course has (if I may so speak) altered its direction, as regards His second coming, and runs, not towards it, but along it, and on the brink of it; and is at all times equally near that great event, which, did it run towards, it would at once run into. Christ, then, is ever at our doors; as near eighteen hundred years ago as now, and not nearer now than then; and not nearer when He comes than now. When He says that He will come soon, “soon” is not a word of time, but of natural order. This present state of things, “the present distress” as St. Paul calls it, is ever *close upon* the next world, and resolves itself into it. As when a man is given over, he may die any moment, yet lingers; as an implement of war may any moment explode, and must at some time; as we listen for a clock to strike, and at length it surprises us; as a crumbling arch hangs, we know not

how, yet is not safe to pass under ; so creeps on this feeble weary world, and one day, before we know where we are, it will end.

And here I may observe in passing, on the light thus thrown upon the doctrine, that Christ is the sole Priest under the Gospel, or that the Apostles ever sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, or that Christ is with them always, even unto the end of the world. Do you not see the force of these expressions ? The Jewish Covenant, indeed, had " sundry times," which were ordered " in divers manners ;" it had a long array of priests and a various history ; one part of the series holier than another, and nearer heaven. But when Christ had come, suffered, and ascended, He was henceforth ever near us, ever at hand, even though He was not actually returned, ever scarcely gone, ever all but come back. He is the only Ruler and Priest in His Church, dispensing gifts, and has appointed none to supersede Him, because he is departed only for a brief season. Aaron took the place of Christ, and had a priesthood of His own ; but Christ's priests have no priesthood but His. They are merely His shadows and organs, they are His outward signs ; and what they do, He does ; when they baptize, He is baptizing ; when they bless, He is blessing. He is in all acts of His Church, and one of its acts is not more truly His act than another, for all are His. Thus we are, in all times of the Gospel, brought close to His Cross. We stand, as it were, under it, and receive its blessings fresh from it ; only that since, historically speaking, time has gone on, and the Holy One is away, certain outward forms are necessary, by way of bringing us again under His shadow ; and we enjoy those blessings through a mystery, or sacramentally, in order to enjoy them really. All this witnesses to the duty both of remembering and of looking out for Christ, teaching us to neglect the present, to rely on no plans, to form no expectations, for the future, but so to live in faith, as if He had not left us, so in hope, as if He had returned to us. We must try to live as if the Apostles were living, and we must try to muse upon our Lord's life in the Gospels, not as a history, but as if a recollection.

2. This leads me to remark upon a second aspect under which the objection in question may be urged ; *viz.* that this waiting for Christ is not only extravagant in its very idea, but becomes a superstition and weakness whenever carried into effect. The mind, intent upon the thought of an awful visitation close at hand, begins to fancy signs of it in the natural and moral world, and mistakes the ordinary events of God's providence for miracles. Thus Christians are brought into bondage, and substitute for the Gospel a fond religion, in which imagination takes the place of faith, and things visible and earthly the

place of Scripture. This is the objection ; yet the text, on the other hand, while it sanctions the expectation, in the words " Surely I come quickly," sanctions also the temper of waiting, by adding, " Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

I observe, then, that though Christians might be mistaken in what they took to be signs of Christ's coming, yet they were not wrong in their state of mind ; they were not mistaken in looking out, and that for Christ. Whether credulous or not, they only acted as one acts towards some person beloved, or revered, or admired on earth. Consider the mode in which loyal persons look up to a good prince ; you will find stories current, up and down the country, in his favour ; people delight in believing that they have fallen in with tokens of his beneficence, nobleness, and paternal kindness. Many of these reports are false, yet others are true, and, on the whole, we should not think highly of that man who, instead of being touched at this mutual sympathy between sovereign and people, occupied himself merely in carping at what he called their credulity, and sifting the accuracy of this or that particular story. A great thing, truly, after all, to be able to detect a few mis-statements, and to expose a few fictions, and to be without a heart ! And forsooth, on the other hand, a sad deficiency in that people, I suppose, merely to be right on the whole, not in every particular, and to have the heart right ! Who would envy such a man's knowledge ? who would not rather have that people's ignorance ? And, in like manner, I had rather be he, who, from love of Christ and want of science, thinks some strange sight in the sky, comet or meteor, to be the sign of His coming, than the man, who, from more knowledge and from lack of love, laughs at the mistake.

Before now, religious persons have taken appearances in the heaven for signs of Christ's coming, which do not now frighten us at all. Granted, but what then ? let us consider the state of the case. Of old time it was not *known* that certain heavenly bodies moved and appeared at *fixed* times and by a rule ; now it is known ; that is, now men are *accustomed* to see them, then they were not accustomed. We know as little now as then *how* they come, or why ; but then men were startled when they saw them, because they were strange, and now they are not strange, and therefore men are not startled. But how was it therefore absurd and ridiculous, (for so it is that persons now-a-days talk,) why was it a foolish fond thing in men to be impressed by what was rare and strange ? Take a parallel case : travelling is common now, it was not common formerly. In consequence, we now travel without any serious emotion at parting from our friends : but then, because it was uncommon, even when risks were the same and the absence as long.

persons did not go from home without much preparation, many prayers, and much leave taking. I do not see anything very censurable in being more impressed at uncommon things than at common.

And you will observe, that in the case of which I am speaking, persons who are looking out for Christ are not only *in* looking out acting in obedience to Him, but are looking out, in the very *way* they look out, through the very signs through which they look out, in obedience to Him. Always since the first, Christians have been looking out for Christ *in* the signs of the natural and moral world. If they have been poor and uneducated, strange sights in the sky, or tremblings of the ground, storms, failure of harvest, or disease, or any thing monstrous and unnatural, has made them think that He was at hand. If they were in a way to take a view of the social and political world, then the troubles of states—wars, revolutions, and the like,—have been additional circumstances which served to impress them, and kept their hearts awake for Christ. Now all these are nothing else but those very things which He Himself has told us to dwell upon, and has given us as signs of His coming. “There shall be signs,” He says, “in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken . . . And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”* One day the lights of heaven *will* be signs; one day the affairs of nations also *will* be signs; why, then, is it superstitious to *look* towards them? It is not. We may be wrong in the particulars we rest upon, and may show our ignorance in doing so; but there is nothing ridiculous or contemptible in our ignorance, and there is much that is religious in our watching. It is better to be wrong in our watching, than not to watch at all.

Nor does it follow that Christians were wrong, even in their anticipations, though Christ did not come, whereas they said, they saw His signs. Perhaps they *were* His signs, and He withdrew them again. Is there no such thing as countermanding? Do not skilful men in matters of this world sometimes form anticipations which turn out wrong, and yet we say that they *ought* to have been right? The sky threatens and then clears again. Or some military leader orders his men forward, and then for some reason recalls them; shall we say that informants were wrong who brought the news that he was moving? Well, in one sense Christ is ever moving forward, ever checking, the

* Luke xxi. 25—28.

armies of heaven. Signs of the white horses are ever appearing, ever vanishing. "Clouds return after the rain;" and His servants are not wrong in pointing to them, and saying that the weather is breaking, though it does not break, for it is ever unsettled.

And another thing should be observed, that though Christians have ever been expecting Christ, ever pointing to His signs, they have never said that He was come. They have but said that He was just coming, *all but* come. And so He was and is. Enthusiasts, sectaries, wild presumptuous men, *they* have said that He was *actually* come, or they have pointed out the exact year and day in which He would come. Not so His humble followers. They have neither announced nor sought Him, either in the desert or in the secret chambers, nor have they attempted to determine "the times and seasons, which the Father has put in His own power." They have but waited; when He actually comes, they will not mistake Him; and before then, they pronounce nothing. They do but see His forerunners.

Surely there can be no great harm, and nothing very ridiculous, where men are religious, in thus thinking the events of their day more than ordinary; in fancying that the world's matters are winding up, and that events are thickening for a final visitation; for, let it be observed, Scripture sanctions us in interpreting *all* that we see in the world in a religious sense, and as if all things were tokens and revelations of Christ, His Providence, and will. I mean, that if this lower world, which seems to go on in its own way, independently of Him, governed by fixed laws or swayed by lawless hearts, will, nevertheless, in an awful way herald His coming to judge it, surely it is not impossible that the same world, both in its physical order and its temporal course, speaks of Him also in other manners. At first, indeed, one might argue that this world did but speak a language contrary to Him; that in Scripture it is described as opposed to God, to truth, to faith, to heaven; that it is said to be a deceitful veil, misrepresenting things, and keeping the soul from God. How then, it may be asked, can this world have upon it tokens of His presence, or bring us near to Him? Yet certainly so it is, that in spite of the world's evil, after all, He is in it and speaks through it, though not loudly. When He came in the flesh "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." Nor did He strive nor cry, nor lift up His voice in the streets. So it is now. He still is here; He still whispers to us, He still makes signs to us. But His voice is so low, and the world's din is so loud, and His signs are so covert, and the world is so restless, that it is difficult to determine when He addresses us, and what He says. Religious men cannot but feel, in various ways, that

His Providence is guiding them and blessing them personally, on the whole ; yet when they attempt to put their finger upon the times and places, the traces of His presence disappear. Who is there, for instance, but has been favoured with answers to prayer, such that, at the time, he has felt he never could again be unbelieving ? Who has not had strange coincidences in his course of life which brought before him, in an overpowering way, the hand of God ? Who has not had thoughts come upon him with a sort of mysterious force, for his warning or his direction ? And some persons, perhaps, experience stranger things still. Wonderful providences have before now been brought about by means of dreams ; or in other still more unusual ways Almighty God has at times interposed. And then, again, things which come before our eyes, in such wise take the form of types and omens of things moral or future, that the spirit within us cannot but reach forward and presage what it is not told from what it sees. And sometimes these presages are remarkably fulfilled in the event. And then, again, the fortunes of men are so singularly various, as if a law of success and prosperity embraced a certain number, and a contrary law others. All this being so, and the vastness and mystery of the world being borne in upon us, we begin to think that there is nothing but, for what we know, may have a connection with every thing else ; the most distant events may yet be united, and meanest and highest may be parts of one ; and God may be teaching us and offering us knowledge of His ways, if we will but open our eyes, in all the ordinary matters of the day. This is what thoughtful persons come to believe, and they begin to show a sort of faith in the divine meaning of the accidents (as they are called) of life, and a readiness to take impressions from them, which may easily become excessive, and which, whether excessive or not, is sure to be ridiculed by the world at large as superstition. Yet, considering Scripture tells us that the very hairs of our head are all numbered by God, that all things are ours, and that all things work together for our good, it does certainly encourage us in thus looking out for His presence in every thing that happens, however trivial, and in trusting that to religious ears even the bad world prophecies of Him.

Yet, I say, this religious waiting upon God through the day, which is so like that spirit of watching which is under consideration, is just as open to objection and scoffing from the world. God does not so speak to us through the occurrences of life, that you can persuade others of His speaking. He does not act upon such explicit laws, that you can speak of them with certainty. He gives us sufficient tokens of Himself to raise our minds in awe towards Him ; but He seems so frequently to undo what He has done, and to suffer counterfeits of His

tokens, that a conviction of His wonder-working presence can but exist in the individual himself. It is not a truth that can be taught and recognised in the face of men ; it is not of a nature to be urged upon the world at large, nay, even on religious persons, as a principle. God gives us enough to make us inquire and hope ; not enough to make us insist and argue.

I have all along been speaking of thoughtful and conscientious persons ; those who do their duty, and who study Scripture. It is quite certain that this regard of outward occurrences does become superstition, when it is found in men of irreligious lives, or of slender knowledge of Scripture. The great and chief revelation which God has made us of His will is through Christ and His Apostles. They have given us a knowledge of the truth ; they have sent forth heavenly principles and doctrines into the world ; they have accompanied that revealed truth by divine sacraments, which convey to the heart what otherwise would be a mere outward and barren knowledge ; and they have told us to practise what we know, and to obey what we are taught, that the Word of Christ may be formed and dwell in us. They have been inspired, moreover, to write Holy Scriptures for our learning and comfort ; and in those Scriptures we find the history of this world interpreted for us by a heavenly rule. When, then, a man, thus formed and fortified within, with these living principles in his heart, with this firm hold and sight of things invisible, with likings, opinions, views, aims, moulded upon God's revealed law, looks abroad into the world, he does not come to the world for a revelation,—he has one already. He does not take his religion from the world, nor does he set an over-value upon the tokens and presages which he sees there. But far different is the case when a man is not thus enlightened and informed by revealed truth. Then he is but a prey ; he becomes the slave, of the occurrences and events, the sights and sounds, the omens and prodigies, which meet him in the world, natural and moral. His religion is a bondage to things perishable, an idolatry of the creature, and is, in the worst sense of the word, superstition. Hence it is a common remark, that irreligious men are most open to superstition. For they have a misgiving that there is something great and divine somewhere : and since they have it not within them, they have no difficulty in believing that it is any where else, wherever men pretend to the possession of it. Thus you find in history bad men practising unlawful arts, consulting professed wizards, or giving heed to astrology. Others have had their lucky and unlucky days ; others have been the sport of dreams, or of other idle fancies. And you have had others bowing themselves down to idols. For they have had no principle, no root in

themselves. They have been ignorant, too, of Scripture, in which God has most mercifully removed the veil off a portion of this world's history, in order that we may see *how* He works. Scripture is the key by which we are given to interpret the world; but they who have it not, roam amid the shadows of the world, and interpret things at random.

The same want of inward religious principle is shown in the light, senseless way in which so many adopt wrong forms of religious profession. He who has the light of Christ within him, hears the voice of enthusiastic, mistaken, self-willed, or hypocritical men, calling him to follow them, without being moved. But when a man is conscious he is a wilful sinner, and not at peace with God, when his own heart is against him, and he has no principle, no stay within him, then he is the prey of the first person who comes to him with strong language, and bids him believe in him. Hence you find numbers running eagerly after men, who profess to work miracles, or who denounce the Church as apostate, or who maintain that none are saved but those who agree with themselves, or any one who, without any warrant of his being right, speaks confidently. Hence the multitude is so open to sudden alarms. You hear of their rushing out of a city in numbers at some idle prediction that the Day of Judgment is coming. Hence so many, in the private and lower ranks of life, are so full of small superstitions, which are too minute to mention; all because they have not the light of truth burning in their heart.

But the true Christian is not of these. To him apply St. Paul's words, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."* He knows how to "use this world as not abusing it." He *depends* on nothing in this world. He trusts not *its* sights against the revealed Word. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." Such is the promise made to him. And if he looks out into the world to seek, it is not to seek what he does not know, but what he does. He does not seek a Lord and Saviour. He has "found the Messiah" long since; and he is looking out for Him. His Lord Himself has *bid* him look for Him in the signs of the world, and therefore he looks out. His Lord Himself has shown him, in the Old Testament, how He, the Lord of Glory, condescends to humble Himself to the things of heaven and earth. He knows that God's Angels are about the earth. He knows that once they even used to come in human shape. He knows that

the Son of God, ere now, has come on earth. He knows that He promised to His Church the presence of a miraculous agency, and has never recalled His promise. Again, he reads, in the Book of the Revelation, quite enough, not to show him what is coming, but to show him that now, as heretofore, a secret supernatural system is going on *under* this visible scene. And therefore he looks out for Christ, for His present providences, and for His coming; and though often deceived in His expectation, and fancying wonderful things are coming on the earth, when they still delay, he uses, and comforts him with the Prophet's words, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul, which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."*

SERMON XVIII.

SUBJECTION OF THE REASON AND FEELINGS TO THE REVEALED WORD.

2 CORINTHIANS x. 5.

Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

THE question may be asked, How is it possible to live as if the coming of Christ were not far off, when our reason tells us that it probably is distant? It may be objected that there are no grounds for expecting it now, more than for the last eighteen hundred years; that if His long absence is a reason for expecting it now, yet His promise of a speedy return was a reason for expecting it in early times; and if the one reason has turned out insufficient, so may the other; that if,

* Hab. ii. 1—4.

in spite of His promise to be speedy, He has tarried so long, He may tarry longer still ; that no signs of His coming can be greater than were abroad soon after His departure ; that, certainly, there are no such signs now ; nay, that during the first seven hundred years, and again about the year 1000, and later, there were many more signs of Christ's coming than there are now,—more trouble of nations, more distress, more sickness, more terror. It may be said, that we cannot hope, and fear, and expect, and wait, as we will,—but that we must have *reasons* for so doing ; and that if we are persuaded, in our deliberate judgment, that Christ's coming is not probable, we cannot make ourselves feel as if it were probable.

Now, in considering this objection, which I shall do, I may have an opportunity of stating a great principle which obtains in Christian duty, the subjection of the whole mind to the law of God.

1. I deny, then, that our feelings and likings are only moved according to the dictates of what we commonly mean by reason ; so far from it, that nothing is more common, on the other hand, than to say, that reason goes one way, and our wishes go another. There is nothing impossible, then, in learning to look out for the day of Christ's coming more earnestly than according to its probability in the judgment of reason. As reason may be a right guide for our feelings and likings to go by up to a certain point, so there may be cases in which it is unable to guide us, from its weakness ; and as it is not impossible for sinful and irreligious men to like what their reason tells them they should not like ; therefore it is not impossible for religious men also to desire, expect, and hope, what their reason is unequal to approve and accept. What is more common than to hear it said, "I love a person more than I respect him ?" or, "I admire him more than I love him ?" Or, again, we know how easy it is to open the mind to the influence of some feeling or emotion, and how difficult it is to avoid such influence ; how difficult it is to get a thought out of the mind, which reason says ought to be kept out, and which will intrude itself again and again ; how difficult to restrain anger, fear, or other passion, which yet reason tells us should be restrained. It is, then, quite possible to have feelings and thoughts present with us in a way which is disproportionate, according to the judgment of reason. Or, take another instance. We know how the mind sometimes dwells upon the chance of what is barely possible, quite unreasonably, and often wrongly and dangerously. A number of things may happen, one perhaps as likely as another ; and yet, from weakness of health, or excitement, it often happens that we cannot help thinking overmuch of some one of these possible events, and getting unduly anxious lest it should happen. Thus, if some dreadful occurrence has

taken place, a fire, or a murder, or some horrible accident, persons become frightened lest the same should happen to them, in a measure far exceeding what a mere calculation of probabilities warrants. Their imagination magnifies the danger; they cannot persuade themselves to look at things calmly, and according to their general course. They fix their thoughts upon one particular chance, in a way quite contrary to what reason suggests. Thus, so far from our feelings being moved according to the strict probabilities of things, the contrary is rather the rule. What Almighty God then requires of us is, to do that in one instance for His sake, which we do so commonly in indulgence of our own waywardness and weakness; to hope, fear, expect our Lord's coming, more than reason warrants, and in a way which His word alone warrants; that is, to trust Him above our reason. You say, that it is not probable Christ will come at this time, and therefore you cannot expect it. Now, I say, you can expect it. You must feel there is a chance that He will come. Well, then, dwell on that chance; open your mind to it; treat that chance just as you so often treat the chance of fire, or peril by sea, or peril by land, or thieves. Our Lord says, that He shall come as a thief in the night. Now you know that if there has been some remarkable robbery, people are frightened far more than according to the chance of their being themselves robbed. They are haunted by the idea; say that the probability of their own houses being attempted is but small, yet the thing itself is an object of great apprehension to them, and they think more of the grievousness of the event apprehended, should it happen, than of the small chance of its happening. They are moved by the risk. And in like manner, as regards the coming of Christ; I do not say we must be excited, or unsettled, or engrossed with the thought, but still we must not let the long delay persuade us not to watch for it. "Though it tarry, wait for it." If He bids us, as a matter of duty, impress the prospect of His coming upon our imagination, He asks no hard thing; no hard thing, that is, to the willing mind; and what we can do, we are bound to do.

2. This is what first suggests itself, but it opens the way to further thoughts. For only reflect, what is faith itself but an acceptance of things unseen, from the love of them, *beyond* the determinations of calculation and experience? Faith outstrips argument. If there is only a chance that the Bible is true, that heaven is the reward of obedience, and hell of wilful sin, it is worth while, it is safe, to sacrifice this world to the next. It were worth while, though Christ told us to sell all that we have and follow Him, and to pass our time here in poverty and contempt, it were worth while on that chance to do it. This, then, is what is meant by faith going against reason, that it cares

not for the measure of probabilities ; it does not ask whether a thing is more or less likely ; but if there is a fair and clear likelihood what God's will is, it acts upon it. If there were nine chances against the truth of Scripture, and but one for it, yet the greatness of the prize and of the punishment weighs far more than nine times the consequence of the word of Scripture failing. If Scripture were not true, we should be left where we were ; we should, in the event, be no worse off than before ; but if it be true, then we shall be infinitely worse off for not believing it than if we had believed it. We all know the retort which the aged saint made in the story, when a licentious youth reminded him, how he would have wasted life if there were *no* future state of recompense : " True, my son," he answered, " but how *much* worse a waste is yours if there *is*."

Faith, then, does not regard *degrees* of evidence. You might lay it down as a rule, speaking in the way of reason, that we ought to have faith according to the evidence ; that the more evidence there is, the more firm it should be ; and the less evidence, the weaker will it be required of us. But this is not the case as regards religious faith, which accepts the Word of God as firmly on the evidence it is vouchsafed, as if that evidence were doubled. This, indeed, we see to be the case as regards things of earth ; and surely what we do towards men, we may bear to do towards God. If any one whom we trust and revere told us any news, which he had perfect means of knowing, we should believe him ; we should not believe it more thoroughly because another told us also. And in like manner, though it is quite certain that Almighty God might have given us greater evidence than we possess, that He speaks to us in the Bible ; yet since He has given us enough, faith does not ask for more, but is satisfied, and acts upon what *is* enough ; whereas unbelief is ever asking for signs, more and greater, before it will yield to the Divine Word.

Returning to my main subject, I observe, in like manner, what is true of faith is true of hope. We may be commanded, if so be, to hope against hope, or to expect Christ's coming, in a certain sense, against reason. It is not inconsistent with God's general dealings with us, that He should bid us feel and act as if that were at hand, which yet, if we went by what experience tells us, we should say was not likely to be at hand. If He bids us to believe in Him with our whole heart, whether the evidence of His speaking to us be greater or less, why may He not bid us wait for Him perseveringly, though the signs of His coming disappoint us, and reason desponds ? We cannot tell in such a matter what is probable and what is not ; we can but attempt what we are told to do. And *that* we can do : we can direct

and fashion our feelings according to His word, and leave the rest to Him.

3. Here, then, I am led to make a further remark ; that as it is our duty to bring some things before our minds, and contemplate them much more vividly than reason by itself would bid us, so again, there are other things which it is a duty to put away from us, not to dwell upon, and not to realize, though they be brought before us. And yet it is evident, too, that persons might here also object, and say that it is impossible to help being moved and influenced by what we know for certain, just as they say that it is impossible to believe and expect what we know to be not certain.

For instance ; we know that it is a duty not to be vain and conceited about any personal advantage we may happen to possess. Yet a man might ask, How is it possible to help it? He might say, "If persons excel in any respect, they must know it; it is quite absurd to suppose, as a rule, that they should not; but if they know it, how is it possible they should not take pleasure in their own excellence, and admire themselves for it? Admiration is the natural consequence of the sight of excellence: if persons know they excel, they cannot help admiring themselves; and if they excel, generally speaking, they cannot but know it; and this, whatever it be they excel in, whether in personal appearance, or in power of speech, or in gifts of mind, or in character, or in any other way."

But now, on the other hand, I suppose that it is quite certain that Scripture tells us *not* to pride ourselves on anything we are, anything we do; that is, not to indulge those feelings which, it seems, are the natural and legitimate result of our knowing what we do know. Now what is to be said to this? how are these opposites to be reconciled?

One answer would of course be this; that religious men know how defective, after all, their best deeds are, or their best points of character; or they know how much more others do; or they know their own great deficiencies in other respects; or they know how trifling some of those points are on which they may happen to be superior to others. But this is not a sufficient answer; because the points in question *are* excellences, whether great excellences or not, or whether or not there be others greater, or however wanting the parties may be in other respects. And herein lies, I think, the temptation which all persons have to self-esteem, that in a certain sense their judgment about themselves is not wrong; not that they are not very deficient in many things, not as if they did not know this, but that they *have* certain excellences, which really *are* excellences, and they *feel* them; and the question is, how can they help feeling them?

It may be suggested, perhaps, to account for the humility of religious men, that, whatever personal gifts they may have, they are *used* to them ; and this it is which keeps them from thinking much of them. There is truth in this remark, of course, but it does not explain why they *once* have not thought much of them, *viz.* when the sight of what they were, was not so familiar to them as it is ; and if they did, we may be sure that the effects of their former self-conceit will remain upon them now, having become habitual.

Another and far better reason why religious persons are not self-conceited is, that they dislike to think of whatever is good in them, and turn away from the thought of it, whether their superiority to others be in mind or body, in intellectual powers or in moral attainments. But there is, I think, another more direct reason, and more connected with my present subject.

It is this : though religious men have gifts, and though they know it, yet they do not *realize* them. It is not necessary here to explain exactly what is meant by the word "realizing ;" we all understand the word enough for my present purpose, and shall all confess that, at least, there is an abundance of matters which men do *not* realize, though they ought to do so. For instance ; how loudly men talk of the shortness of this life, of its vanity and unprofitableness, and of the claims which the world to come has upon us ! This is what we hear said daily, yet few act upon the truths they utter ; and why ? because they do not *realize* what they are so ready to proclaim. They do not see Him who is invisible, and His eternal kingdom.

Well, then, what men omit to do when the doing is a duty, that they can surely also omit to do in cases when omission is a duty. Serious men may know indeed, if it so be, what their excellences are, whether religious, or moral, or any other, but they do not feel them in that vivid way which we call realizing. They do not open their hearts to the knowledge, so that it becomes fruitful. Barren knowledge is a wretched thing, when it is given us to bear fruit ; but it is a good thing, when it would otherwise act merely as a temptation. When men realize a truth, it becomes an influential principle within them, and leads to a number of consequences both in opinion and in conduct. The case is the same as regards realizing our own gifts. But men of superior minds know without realizing. They may know that they have certain excellences, if they have them, they may know that they have good points of character, or abilities, or attainments ; but it is in the way of an unproductive knowledge, which leaves the mind just as it found it. And this seems to be what gives such a remarkable simplicity to the character of holy men, and amazes others so much that they think it a

paradox or inconsistency, or even a mark of insincerity, that the same persons should profess to know so much about themselves, and yet so little,—that they can hear so much said about themselves, that they can bear so much praise, so much popularity, so much deference, and yet without being puffed up, or arrogating aught, or despising others ; that they can speak about themselves, yet in so unaffected a tone, with so much nature, with such child-like innocence, and such graceful frankness.

Another instance of this great gift of knowing without realizing, is afforded us in relation to subjects to which I will but allude. Men who indulge their passions have a knowledge, different in kind from those who have abstained from such indulgence ; and when they speak on subjects connected with it, realize them in a way in which others cannot realize them. The very ideas which are full of temptation to the former, the words which are painful to them to utter, all that causes them shame and confusion of face, can be said and thought of by the innocent without any distress at all. Angels can look upon sin with simple abhorrence and wonder, without humiliation or secret emotion ; and a like simplicity is the reward of the chaste and holy ; and that to the great amazement of the unclean, who cannot understand the state of mind of such a one, or how he can utter or endure thoughts which to themselves are full of misery and guilt. And hence sometimes you find men of these days, in which the will of the natural man is indulged to the full, taking up the writings of holy men who have lived in deserts or in cloisters, or with an angel's heart have ruled Christ's flock, and broken with holy hands the bread of life, and viewing their words in their own murky atmosphere, and imputing to them their own grossness ; nay, carping at the words of Holy Scripture, which are God's, and at the words of the Church, as if the sacred mystery of the Incarnation had not introduced a thousand new and heavenly associations in this world of sin.

And hence again you will find self-indulgent men unable to comprehend the real existence of sanctity and severity of mind in any one. They think that all persons must be full of the same wretched thoughts and feelings which torment themselves. They think that none can avoid it, from the nature of the case ; only that certain persons choose to hide what goes on in their hearts, and, in consequence, they call them pretenders and hypocrites.

This, too, is what they also say as regards the instance which I took first,—a man's knowledge of his gifts. They think that men who appear to think little of themselves are conceited within, and that what is called modesty is affectation.

I might make the same remark also as regards the absence of resentment upon injury or insult, which characterizes a really religious man. Often, indeed, such a one feels keenly what is done against him, though he represses the feeling as a matter of duty ; but the higher state of mind is when he does not feel, that is, when he does not realize, that any injustice has been done him ; so that if he attempts to speak of it, it will be in the same sort of strange, unreal, and (as I may say,) forced and unnatural way in which pretenders to religion speak of religious joy and spiritual comfort, for he is as little at home with anger and revenge as hypocrites are with thoughts of heaven.

Again ; we may so unduly realize that a life of virtue is for our interest, as to act on prudential motives, not from a sense of duty. And again ; though it be our duty to inquire and search out the truth in religious matters, yet we may so vaunt in our private judgment, and make a merit of the exercise of it, that our search becomes almost a sin.

Here then are a number of cases, all in point, to illustrate one and the same truth, that the Christian's character is formed by a rule higher than that of calculation and reason, consisting in a divine principle or life, which transcends the anticipations and criticisms of ordinary men. Judging by mere worldly reason, the Christian ought to be self-conceited, for he is gifted ; he ought to understand evil, because he sees and speaks of it ; he ought to feel resentment, because he is conscious of injury ; he ought to act from self-interest, because he knows that what is right is also expedient ; he ought to be conscious and fond of the exercises of private judgment, because he engages in them ; he ought to be doubting and hesitating in his faith, because his evidence for it might be greater ; he ought to have no expectation of Christ's coming, because Christ has delayed so long ; but not so : his mind and heart are formed on a different mould. In these, and ten thousand other ways, he is open to the misapprehensions of the world, which neither has his feelings nor can enter into them. Nor can he explain and defend them on considerations which all men, good and bad, can understand. He goes by a law which others know not ; not his own wisdom or judgment, but by Christ's wisdom and the judgment of the Spirit, which is imparted to him,—by that inward incommunicable perception of truth and duty, which is the rule of his reason, affections, wishes, tastes, and all that is in him, and which is the result of persevering obedience. This it is which gives so unearthly a character to his whole life and conversation, which is "hid with Christ in God;" he has ascended with Christ on high, and there "in heart and mind continually dwells;" and he is obliged, in consequence, to put a veil upon his face, and is mysterious in the world's judgment, and "becomes as it were a monster unto many,"

though he be "wiser than the aged," and have "more understanding than his teachers, because he keeps God's commandments." Thus "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man ;" and with him "it is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment," for "he that judgeth him is the Lord."*

One additional remark is necessary in conclusion, with reference to the subject with which I began, the duty of waiting for our Lord's coming, it must not be supposed then that this implies a neglect of our duties in this world. As it is possible to watch for Christ, in spite of earthly reasonings to the contrary, so is it possible to engage in earthly duties, in spite of our watching. Christ has told us, that when He comes two men shall be in the field, two women at the mill, "the one shall be taken and the other left." You see that good and bad are engaged in the same way ; nor need it hinder any one from having his heart firmly fixed on God, that he is engaged in worldly business with those whose hearts are upon the world. Nay, we may form large plans, we may busy ourselves in new undertakings, we may begin great works which we cannot do more than begin ; we may make provision for the future, and anticipate in our acts the certainty of centuries to come, yet be looking out for Christ. Thus indeed are we bound to proceed, and to leave "times and seasons in His Father's power." Whenever He comes, He will cut things short ; and, for what we know, our efforts and beginnings, though they be nothing more, are just as necessary in the course of His Providence, as could be the most successful accomplishment. Surely, He will end the world abruptly, whenever He comes ; He will break off the designs and labours of His elect, whatever they are, and give them what their dutiful anxiety aims at, though not through it. And, as He will end, so did He begin the world abruptly ; He began the world which we see, not from its first seeds and elements, but He created at once the herb and the fruit-tree perfect "whose seed is in itself," not a gradual formation but a complete work. And with even a greater abruptness did He display His miracles when He came and new made all things, creating bread, not corn, for the supply of the five thousand, and changing water, not into any simpler, though precious liquid, but into wine. And as He began without beginning, so will He end without an ending ; or rather, all that all we do,—whatever we are doing,—whether we have time for more or time for less,—yet our work, finished or unfinished, will be acceptable, if done for Him. There is no inconsistency, then, in watching yet working, for we may work without setting our hearts on our work. Our sin will be if we idolize the work

• 1 Cor. ii. 15 ; iv. 3, 4.

of our hands ; if we love it so well as not to bear to part with it. The test of our faith lies in our being able to fail without disappointment.

Let us pray God to rule our hearts in this respect as well as in others ; that “when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.”

SERMON XIX.

THE GOSPEL PALACES.

PSALM lxxviii. 69.

He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever.

THERE was one occasion when our Saviour said, “The hour cometh, when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The hour cometh, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”* Did we take these words by themselves, we might consider they implied, that, under the Gospel, there would be no outward tokens of religion, no rites and ordinances at all, no public services, no assemblings of ourselves together, and especially, no sacred buildings. Such an inference, however, would be a great error, if it were only for this reason, that it has never been received, never acted on in any age of the Church ; so far from it, that I suppose there are few indeed but would shrink from the very mention of it, and none at all who could be found to testify that they had adopted it in their own case, yet had not suffered from it in point of inward devotion to God’s service. That cannot be the true sense of Scripture, which never has been fulfilled, which ever has been contradicted and disobeyed ; for God’s word shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish his pleasure and prosper in His purpose. Our Saviour did not say to the Samaritan woman that there should be no places and

* John iv. 21—23.

buildings for worship under the Gospel, *because* He has not brought it to pass, *because* they ever have been, at all times and in all countries, and amid all differences of faith. And the same reasons which lead us to believe that religious edifices are a Christian ordinance, though so very little is said about them in Scripture, will also show that it is right and pious to make them enduring, and stately, and magnificent, and ornamental ; so that our Saviour's declaration, when He foretold the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, was not that there should never be any other house built to His honour, but rather that there should be many houses ; that they should be built, not merely at Jerusalem, or at Gerizim, but everywhere ; what was under the Law a local ordinance, being henceforth a Catholic privilege, allowed not here and there, but wherever was the Spirit and the Truth. The glory of the Gospel is not the *abolition* of rites, but their *dissemination* ; not their absence, but their living and efficacious presence in the grace of Christ. Accordingly, such passages as the text, though spoken in the times of the Law, are fulfilled even at this day, and, as we trust, among ourselves. The Jewish Temple, indeed, of which the Psalmist speaks in the first instance, has come to nought ; but he has a meaning still, and a noble one, as signifying the Christian institution of Churches.

“He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established forever.” How much more strikingly and fully is this accomplished in our times than in those of the Law ! Rich and “exceeding magnifical” as was Solomon's Temple, and built at the immediate command of God, it is not presumptuous surely to say that Christian Temples have as far surpassed it in size, beauty, and costliness, as in divine gifts and privileges, in spirit and in truth. “He built His sanctuary like high palaces ;” look through this very country,—compare its palaces with its Cathedrals and Churches, even in their present state of disadvantage, and say whether these words are not more than accomplished ; so that the palaces of England should rather, by way of honour, be compared to the Cathedrals, than the Cathedrals to the palaces. And rightly so ; for our first duty is towards our Lord and His Church, and our second towards our earthly Sovereign. And still more strikingly has the promise of permanence been fulfilled to us. For what were the years of Solomon's Temple ? Four hundred. What of the second Temple ? Six hundred. These were long periods, certainly ; yet is it plain that the Church of Christ can more than equal them, and that in a great number of cases. Nay, there are Christian Temples in some parts of the world, which have lasted as much as fourteen hundred years. Surely, then, when Christ multiplied his sacred palaces, He also gave them an extended age, bringing back under the Gospel the

days of the Antediluvian patriarchs. The times are reversed, and a more vigorous life has been infused among us than at the first, and the reign of Christ and His Saints has begun long since, and the Apostles fill their thrones in His Temples. "He hath built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever."

Stability and permanence are, perhaps, the especial ideas which a Church brings before the mind. It represents, indeed, the beauty, the loftiness, the calmness, the mystery, and the sanctity of religion also, and that in many ways; still, I will say, more than all these, it represents to us its eternity. It is the witness of Him who is the beginning and the ending, the first and with the last; it is the token and emblem of "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" it is the pledge of One, who has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," but "even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you." All ye who take part in the building of a Church, know that you have been admitted to the truest symbol of God's eternity. You have built what may be destined to have no end but Christ's coming. Cast your thoughts back on the time when our ancient buildings were first reared. Consider the Churches all around us; how many generations have passed since stone was put upon stone till the whole was finished! The first movers and instruments of its erection, the minds that planned it, and the limbs that wrought at it, the pious hands that contributed to it, and the holy lips that consecrated it, have long, long ago, been taken away; yet we benefit by their good deed. Does it not seem a very strange thing that *we* should be fed, and lodged, and clothed in spiritual things, by persons we never saw or heard of, and who never saw us, or could think of us, hundreds of years ago? Does it not seem strange that men should be able, not merely by acting on others, not by a continued influence carried on through many minds in a long succession, but by one simple and direct act to come into contact with us, and as if with their own hand to benefit us, who live centuries later? What a visible, palpable specimen this, of the communion of saints! What a privilege thus to be immediately interested in the deeds of our forefathers! and what a call on us, in like manner, to reach out our own hands towards our posterity! Freely we have received; let us freely give. Let us not be slack to do what our fathers have done; to do a work, the fruits of which we cannot see, because they are too vast to be seen. If it were told us, that a word of ours, uttered by the mouth, should take, as it were, consistence, and float and continue in the air, and impart advice or comfort to men who were to live five hundred years to come, it would be an inspiring thought; and what but this is our very privilege, in the leave granted us to mul-

tiply the One Temple of God all over the earth, unto all time? It is to make our deeds live; it is to hold fellowship with the future.

See what a noble principle faith is. Faith alone lengthens a man's existence, and makes him, in his own feelings, live in the future and in the past. Men of this world are full of plans of the day. Even in religion they are ever coveting immediate results, and will do nothing at all, unless they can do everything,—can have their own way, choose their methods, and see the result. But the Christian throws himself fearlessly upon the future, because he believes in Him which is, and which was, and which is to come. He can endure to be one of an everlasting company while in this world, as well as in the next. He is content to begin, and break off; to do his part, and no more; to set about what others must accomplish; to sow what others must reap. None has finished His work, and cut it short in righteousness but He who is One. We, His members, who have but a portion of His fulness, execute but a part of His purpose. One lays the foundation, and another builds thereupon; one levels the mountain, and another “brings forth the headstone with shoutings.” Thus were our Churches raised. One age would build a Chancel, and another a Nave, and a third would add a Chapel, and a fourth a Shrine, and a fifth a Spire. By little and little the work of grace went forward; and they could afford to take time about it, and be at pains to do it best, who had a promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it. Powers of the earth rise and fall; revolutions come in course; great families appear, and are swept away; wise men are in high places, and walk amid the sparks which they have kindled. They *feel* they are short-lived, and they determine to make the most of their time. They grasp and push forwards, they are busy and feverish, not only from the feebleness and waywardness of their nature, but from the conviction of their reason, that they have but a short time. “Our time is short,” say they, “let us buy and sell, and plant and build, and marry wives, and give in marriage, and eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.” Poor worms of the earth, it is too true of them. Their aims and desires, their instruments, their goods, their bodies, their souls, are all perishable. In the words of the wise man, “as soon as they are born, they *begin* to draw to an end,”* they begin to die. Their growth and progress, their successes, are but the first stages of corruption and dissolution. Poor children of time, what are they? They triumph over religion in their day; they insult its ordinances and its ministers; they tyrannize in its Temples, showing themselves that they are gods. They carry away its massive stones to their

* Wisdom v. 13.

own houses, and trick themselves out with its jewels. They build up their families by rapine and sacrilege ; they are wanton when they are not covetous ; and, when satiated with pillage, they mutilate and defile what they do not destroy. But, after all, how speaks the Psalmist ? "I have said ye are gods, and ye are all the children of the Most Highest. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." "The proud have robbed, they have slept their sleep, and all the men whose hands were mighty have found nothing." "Fret not thyself because of the ungodly ; neither be thou envious against the evil-doers ; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and be withered even as the green herb. I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay tree ; I went by, and lo, he was gone ; I sought him, but his place could not then be found."* We rise in the morning, and, behold, they are all dead corpses. The storm has passed, the morning has broken, the Egyptians are cast on the sea-shore, God's Tabernacle is still standing. As though no violence had been in the night, no assaults of Satan and Antichrist, no arm of force, no envious or covetous eye, they remain, those holy places, where they were ; for the Church abides for evermore, and her Temples, in their deep foundations, and their arching heights, are her image and manifestation.

I have said that the sacred edifices which we see around us, and in which we worship, remind us of their builders, though they lived so long ago ; but in truth they remind us of a time far earlier even than theirs. Do we suppose that the very builders of these shrines were all in all in their building ? Could any men whatever, did they but will it, at any time, build what they have built ? is a Cathedral the offspring of a random thought, a thing to will and to accomplish at our pleasure ? or rather, were not those builders but the successors and the children of others long before them, who made them what they were, and enabled them, under God, to do works, which it was not given to every one to do, but only to the sons of such fathers ? Surely the Churches which we inherit are not the purchase of wealth nor the creation of genius, they are the fruits of martyrdom. They come of high deeds and sufferings, as far before their very building as we are after it. Their foundations are laid very deep, even in the preaching of Apostles, and the confession of Saints, and the first victories of the Gospel in our land. All that is so noble in their architecture, all that captivates the eye and makes its way to the heart, is not a human imagination, but a divine gift, a moral result, a spiritual work. The Cross is ever planted in hazard and suffering, and is watered with tears and blood. No

* Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7 ; lxxvi. 5 ; xxxvii. 1, 2, 36, 37.

where does it take root and bear fruit, except its preaching be with self-denial. It is easy, indeed, for the ruling powers to make a decree, and set religion on high, and extend its range, and herald its name ; but they cannot plant it, they can but impose it. The Church alone can plant the Church. The Church alone can found her sees, and inclose herself within walls. None but saintly men, mortified men, preachers of righteousness, and confessors for the truth, can create a home for the truth in any land. The Temples of God are withal the monuments of His Saints, and we call them by their names while we consecrate them to His glory. Their simplicity, grandeur, solidity, elevation, grace, and exuberance of ornament, do but bring to remembrance the patience and purity, the courage, meekness, and great charity, the heavenly affections, the activity in well-doing, the faith and resignation, of men who themselves did but worship in mountains, and in deserts, and in caves and dens of the earth. They laboured, but not in vain, for other men entered into their labours ; and, as if by natural consequence, at length their word prospered after them, and made itself a home, even these sacred palaces in which it has so long dwelt, and which are still vouchsafed to us, in token, as we trust, that they are still with us who spoke that word, and, with them, His Presence who gave them grace to speak it.

O happy they, who, in a sorrowful time, avail themselves of this bond of communion with the Saints of old and the Universal Church ! O wise and dutiful, who, when the world has robbed them of so much, set the more account upon what remains ! We have not lost all, while we have the dwelling-places of our forefathers ; while we can repair those which are broken down, and build upon the old foundations, and propagate them upon new sites ! Happy they, who when they enter within their holy limits, enter in heart into the court of heaven ! And most unhappy, who, while they have eyes to admire, admire them only for their beauty's sake, and the skill they exhibit ; who regard them as works of art, not fruits of grace ; bow down before their material forms, instead of worshipping in spirit and the truth ; count their stones, and measure their spaces, but discern in them no tokens of the invisible, no canons of truth, no lessons of wisdom, to guide them forward in the way heavenward !

In heaven is the substance, of which here below we are vouchsafed the image ; and thither, if we be worthy, we shall at length attain. There is the holy Jerusalem, whose light is like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal ; and whose wall is great and high, with twelve gates, and an Angel at each ;—whose glory is the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

SERMON XX.

THE VISIBLE TEMPLE.

MATTHEW **xxiii.** 17.

Whether is the greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold ?

A TEMPLE there has been upon earth, a spiritual Temple, made up of living stones, a Temple, as I may say, composed of souls ; a Temple with God for its Light, and Christ for the High Priest, with wings of Angels for its arches, with Saints and Teachers for its pillars, and with worshippers for its pavement ; such a Temple has been on earth ever since the Gospel was first preached. This unseen, secret, mysterious, spiritual Temple exists everywhere, throughout the kingdom of Christ, in all places, as perfect in one place as if it were not in another. Wherever there is faith and love, this Temple is ; faith and love, with the Name of Christ, are as heavenly charms and spells to make present to us this divine Temple, in every part of Christ's kingdom. This Temple is invisible, but it is perfect and real because it is invisible, and gains nothing in perfection by possessing visible tokens. There needs no outward building to meet the eye, in order to make it more of a Temple than it is in itself. God, and Christ, and Angels, and souls, are not these a heavenly court, all perfect, to which this world can add nothing ? Though faithful Christians worship without splendour, without show, in a homely and rude way, still their worship is as acceptable to God, as excellent, as holy, as though they worshipped in the public view of men, and with all the glory and riches of the world.

Such was the Church in its beginnings ; “ built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone,” “ builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” In the Apostles' lifetime it was poor and persecuted, and the holy Temple was all but invisible. There were no edifying rites, no various ceremonies, no rich music, no high Cathedrals, no mystic vestments, no solemn altars, no stone, or marble, or metals, or jewels, or woods of

cost, or fine linen, to signify outwardly, and to honour duly, the heavenly Temple in which we stand and serve. The place where our Lord and Saviour first celebrated the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, was the upper room of a house, hired too or used for the occasion ;* that in which the Apostles and the holy women waited for the promised coming of the Comforter, was also “ an upper room ;”† and that also in which St. Paul preached at Troas was an “ upper chamber, where they were gathered together.”‡ What other places of worship do we hear of ? The water side, out in the open air ; as at Philippi, where, we are told, “ on the Sabbath,” St. Paul and his companions “ went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made.”§ And by the sea-shore : “ They all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city ; and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed.”|| And St. Peter was in prayer on the house-top ; and St. Paul and St. Silas sang their hymns and psalms in prison, with their feet in the stocks ; and St. Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert. Yet, wherever they were, whether in prison, or on the house-top, or in the wilderness, or by the water side, or on the sea-shore, or in a private room, God and Christ were with them. The Spirit of grace was there, the Temple of God was around them. They were come unto the mystical Sion, and to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the spirits of the Just. There needed not gold, nor jewels, nor costly array, for those who had what, according to the text, was greater, who had the Temple. It might be right and fitting, if possible, to have these precious things also, but it was not necessary ; for which was the greater ? Such things did not make the Temple more holy, but became themselves holy by being used for the Temple ; the gold did not sanctify the Temple, but the Temple was greater, and sanctified the gold. Gold is a thing of nought without Christ’s presence ; and *with* His Presence, as in the days of His earthly ministry, it might be dispensed with.

The case is the same as regards the immediate successors of the Apostles, who were in still more forlorn circumstances, as regards worship, than the Apostles themselves. The Christians who came after them, were obliged to worship in graves and tombs to save their lives from the persecutor. In the eastern and southern parts, where the Apostles and the first converts lived, before the glad sound of the Gospel had reached these northern and distant countries, they were accustomed to bury in caves dug out of the rock. Long galleries there are

* Mark. xiv. 15.

† Acts i. 13.

‡ Ibid. xx. 8.

§ Ibid. xvi. 13.

|| Ibid. xxi. 5.

still remaining, in some places miles underground, on each side of which the dead were placed. There the poor persecuted Christians met for worship, and that by night. Or the great people of the day built for themselves high and stately tombs above ground, as large as houses for the living ; here too, in the darkness and solitude of night, did the Saints worship. Or in the depth of some wood, perhaps, where no one was likely to discover them. Such were the places in which the invisible Temple was revealed in times of heathenism ; and who shall say that it wanted aught of outward show to make it perfect ?

This is true and ever to be borne in mind ; and yet no one can deny, on the other hand, that a great object of Christ's coming was to subdue this world, to claim it as His own, to assert His rights as its Master, to destroy the usurped dominion of the enemy, to show Himself to all men, and to take possession. He is that Mustard-tree which was destined silently to spread and overshadow all lands ; He is that Leaven which was secretly to make its way through the mass of human opinions and institutions till the whole was leavened. Heaven and earth had hitherto been separate. His gracious purpose was to make them one, and that by making earth like heaven. He was in the world from the beginning, and man worshipped other gods ; He came into the world in the flesh, and the world knew Him not ; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But He came in order to *make* them receive Him, know Him, worship Him. He came to absorb this world into Himself ; that, as He was light, so it might be light also. When He came, He had not a place to lay His head ; but He came to make Himself a place, to make Himself a home, to make Himself houses, to fashion for Himself a glorious dwelling out of this whole world, which the powers of evil had taken captive. He came in the dark, in the dark night was He born, in a cave underground ; in a cave where cattle were stabled, there was He housed ; in a rude manger was He laid. There first He laid His head ; but He meant not, blessed be His Name, He meant not there to remain for ever. He did not resign Himself to that obscurity ; He came into that cave to leave it. The King of the Jews was born to claim the kingdom ;—yea, rather, the Hope of all nations and the King of the whole earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords ; and He gave not “sleep to His eyes or slumber to His eyelids,” till He had changed His manger for a royal throne, and His grot for high palaces. Lift up your eyes, my brethren, and look around, for it is fulfilled at this day ; yea, long ago, for many ages, and in many countries. “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” Where is the grot ? where the stall for cattle ? where the manger ? where the grass and straw ? where the

unseemly furniture of that despised place? Is it possible that the Eternal Son should have been born in a hole of the earth? was the great miracle there wrought, whereby a pure and spotless Virgin brought forth God? Strange condescension undergone to secure a strange triumph! He purposed to change the earth, and He began "in the lowest pit, in a place of darkness, and in the deep." All was to be by Him renewed, and He availed Himself of nothing that was, that out of nothing He might make all things. He was not born in the Temple of Jerusalem; He abhorred the palace of David; He laid Himself on the damp earth in the cold night, a light shining in a dark place, till by the virtue that went out of Him, He should create a Temple worthy of His Name.

And lo, in omen of the future, even in His cradle, the rich and wise of the earth seek Him with gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, as an offering. And He puts aside the swaddling clothes, and takes instead "a coat without seam, woven from the top throughout." And He changes water into wine; and Levi feasts Him; and Zacchæus receives Him; and Mary anoints His head. Pass a few generations, and the whole face of things is changed; the earth is covered with His Temples; as it has been for ages. Go where you will, you find the eternal mountains hewn and fashioned into shrines where He may dwell, who was an outcast in the days of His flesh. Rivers and mines pay tribute of their richest jewels; forests are searched for their choicest woods; the skill of man is put to task to use what nature furnishes. Go through the countries where His Name is known, and you will find all that is rarest and most wonderful in nature or art has been consecrated to Him. Kings' palaces are poor, whether in architecture or in decoration, compared with the shrines which have been reared to Him. The Invisible Temple has become visible. As on a misty day, the gloom gradually melts and the sun brightens, so have the glories of the spiritual world lit up this world below. The dull and cold earth is penetrated by the rays. All around we see glimpses or reflections of those heavenly things which the elect of God shall one day see face to face. The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; "the Temple has sanctified the gold," and the prophecies made to the Church have been fulfilled to the letter. "The glory of Lebanon" has been "given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." "The glory of Lebanon, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of His sanctuary, and to make the place of His feet glorious. The multitude of camels have covered it, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba have come; they have brought gold and incense, and shown forth the praises of the Lord." "The labour of Egypt, and merchandize of

Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, have come over to it, in chains have they come over ; they have fallen down, they have made supplication.”*

And He has made Him a Temple, not only out of inanimate things, but of men also as parts of it. Not gold and silver, jewels and fine linen, and skill of man to use them, make the House of God, but worshippers, the souls and bodies of men, whom He has redeemed. He takes possession of the whole man, body as well as soul ; for St. Paul says, “I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”† And He claims us as His own, not one by one, but altogether, as one great company ; for St. Peter says, that we “as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”‡ All of us, and every one, and every part of every one, must go to make up His mystical body ; for the Psalmist says, “O God, my heart is ready ; I will sing and give praise with the best member that I have. Awake thou, harp and lute, I myself will awake right early. I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the people ; I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations.”|| Our tongues must preach Him, and our voices sing of Him, and our knees adore Him, and our hands supplicate Him, and our heads bow before Him, and our countenances beam of Him, and our gait herald Him. And hence arise joint worship, forms of prayer, ceremonies of devotion, the course of services, orders of ministers, holy vestments, solemn music, and other things of a like nature ; all of which are, as it were, the incoming into this world of the Invisible Kingdom of Christ, the fruit of its influence, the sample of its power, the earnest of its victories, the means of its manifestation.

Things temporal have their visible establishment, Kings’ courts and palaces, councils and armies, have dazzled the multitude, and blinded them, till they worshipped them as idols. Such is our nature, we must have something to look up to. We cannot help admiring *something* ; and if there is nothing good to admire, we admire what is bad. When then men see proud Babel set up on high with all her show and pomp, when they see or hear of great cities, with their stately mansions, the streets swarming with chariots and horses innumerable, and the shops filled with splendid wares, and great men and women richly dressed, with many attendants, and men crying, Bow the knee, and

* Isaiah xxxv. 2 ; lx. 6, 13 ; xlv. 14.

† 1 Peter ii. 5.

† Rom. xii. 1.

‡ Psalm cxviii. 1—3.

soldiers in bright array, with the sound of the trumpet, and other military music, and other things which one could mention, were it reverent to be particular, simple men are tempted to look up to all this as the summit of perfection and blessedness, nay, as I have said, to worship what seems to them, though they do not so express it, the presence of the Unseen. Hence come in servility, coveting, jealousy, ambition; men wish to be great in this world, and try to be great; they aim at riches, or they lie in wait for promotion. Christ, then, in order to counteract this evil, has mercifully set up His own court and His own polity, that men might have something to fix their eyes upon of a more divine and holy character than the world can supply; that poverty, at least, might divide men's admiration with riches; that meekness might be set up on high as well as pride, and sanctity become our ambition as well as luxury. Sainly bishops with their clergy, officials of all kinds religious bodies, austere Nazarites, prayer and praise without ceasing,—all this hath Christ mercifully set up, to outshine the fascinations of the world. So ran the promise: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night." Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein . . . Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare His praise in the islands."* And these words began to be fulfilled even from the time that Christ came; for, as I said when I began, St. Paul and St. Silas *sang* in the prison; and when he and his party left Tyre, the men, women and children, who accompanied them out, *kneeled down* on the shore with them and prayed. Such were the forms of worship in the beginning; till, as time went on, the Church, like some fair tree, put out her branches and foliage, and stood complete in all manner of holy symbols and spiritual ordinances, an outward sign of that unseen Temple in which Christ had dwelt from the first.

And now, in conclusion, let me observe, that such a view as has been taken of the connection of the ritual of religion with its spiritual and invisible power, will enable us to form a right estimate of things eternal, and keep us both from a curious and superstitious use, and an arrogant neglect of them. The Temple is greater than the gold; therefore care not though the gold be away: it sanctifies it; therefore cherish the gold while it is present. Christ is with us, though there be no outward show; suppose all the comely appendages of our worship stripped

* Isaiah lxii. 6; xlii. 10—12.

off, yet where two or three are gathered together in His Name, He is in the midst of them. Be it a cottage, or the open fields, or even a prison or a dungeon, Christ can be there, and will be there, if His servants are there. You will ask whether this does not countenance persons who hold meetings apart from the Church, or who preach in the streets? No, it does not; because, in such cases, men do not meet together "in the Name of Christ." He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name." Now, it does not follow that men *are* met in His Name because they say or think they are; for He warns us, "Many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." Many a man *thinks* he is speaking in Christ's Name, when he is preaching his own doctrine. Christ did not send such men, yet they have run, and He owns them not, though they even worship in Church. In Church or in the fields would be the same in this matter. Stone walls do not make a Church. Though they were in the vastest, noblest, richest building on earth, still Christ would not be with those who preach another gospel than that which He delivered once for all. This is the very point I am insisting upon. It is the Temple which sanctifieth the gold; it is nothing but the invisible and heavenly Presence which sanctifieth any place or any thing. Magnificent or mean, costly or common, it alone sanctifies either worshippers or building. As it avails not to have sumptuous Churches without the Spirit of Christ, so it is but a mockery to have large congregations, eloquent preachers, and much excitement, if that gracious Spirit is away. But where He really places His *Name*, there, be the spot a palace or a cottage, it is sacred and glorious. He who once lay in a manger, will still condescend to manifest Himself any where, as He did in primitive times. No indignities can be done to Him who inhabiteth eternity. "Heaven is His throne, and earth His footstool;" "the very heaven of heavens cannot contain Him;" much less any house which we can build. High and low is alike to Him. This is an obvious and very comfortable reflection, when we think of the great irreverences and profanations which sometimes take place in Church. Men come in lightly and thoughtlessly; they care not to uncover their heads; they talk and laugh, and even sing, as if they were in a common building; or, when there is any needful work to be done in it, and tools and other implements are brought in, they seem to think as if, all of a sudden, it were turned into an unconsecrated place, because it is necessary to exercise a trade in it.

Or, perhaps, if it so happen, they idle in it at other times, and think that God is not there, because man is not there to see them. And so again, when we go into certain Churches, and see the neglected state

in which they are left, the fond cast aside, or, if not, used as a place to keep any sort of litter in ; and the Holy Table mean and unsightly, with a miserable covering, and the pavement defiled and broken, and the whole building in a state of neglect, of which any neat persons would be ashamed even in their own cottage, (to say nothing what wealthy people would feel, if their rooms were left in such a condition ;) I say, when these and such like sights meet us, perhaps, for an instant, we are tempted to say, Can Christ be here ? Can the Holy Spirit deign to sanctify water for the washing away of sins, brought in, as it is, with such irreverence of manner, and in so mean a vessel ? Or, can the life-giving Presence and the sacrificial power of Christ be upon that Altar ? nay, can it *be* an Altar, which is so wretched to look upon ? But, I ask, or rather, any one will ask himself, on second thoughts, Could Christ be in a manger ? Doubtless, then, He whom the Angels of God worshipped, as the Only-begotten, when brought into the world in a place for cattle, can be manifested, can be worshipped, in the most neglected Church. No ; our distress must not be at all for *Him* ; such would be superstitious and carnal ; our distress must be for the *insult* offered Him, and so far as there is insult. If the state of neglect I am speaking of is no one's fault, then distress there must be none. But if there be blame, then we may and must feel distress, that our Lord should be insulted by His own servants ; and yet more on their account, that they should insult Him. They who profane His presence, who treat its resting-place as a common house, and make free with it, these men do not hurt Christ, but they hurt themselves. The Temple is greater than the gold.

And, while He is displeased with the profane, He accepts our offerings made in faith, whether they be greater or less. He accepts our gold and our silver, not to honour Himself thereby, but in mercy to us. When Mary poured the ointment upon His head, it was her advantage not His ; He praised her, and said, "She hath done what she could." Every one must do his best ; he must pray his best, he must sing his best, he must attend his best. If we did all, it would be little, not worthy of Him ; if we do little, it may suffice to show our faith, and He in His mercy will accept whatever we can offer. He will accept, what we prefer to give to Him to giving to ourselves. When, instead of spending money on our own homes, we spend it on His house, when we prefer He should have the gold and silver to our having it, we do not make our worship more spiritual, but we bring Christ nearer to us ; we show that we are in earnest, we evidence our faith. It requires very little of true faith and love, to feel an unwillingness to spend money on one's self. Fine dresses, fine houses, fine furniture, fine

establishments, are painful to a true Christian ; they create misgivings in his mind whether his portion is with the Saints or with the world. Rather he will feel it suitable to lay out his money in God's service, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to educate the young, to spread the knowledge of the truth, and, among other pious objects, to build and to decorate the visible House of God.

“Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.”* Such was Nehemiah's prayer, when he had been stirred up to cleanse the sanctuary. May God remember us also, if in any measure His grace has moved us to similar acts of zeal for His glory ! And, O may He in His mercy grant that our outward show does not outstrip our inward progress ; that whatever gift, rare or beautiful, we introduce here, may be but a figure of inward beauty and unseen sanctity ornamenting our hearts ! Hearts are the true shrine wherein Christ must dwell. “The King's daughter is all-glorious within ;” and when we are repenting of past sin, and cleaning ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, then, and then only, may we safely employ ourselves in brightening, embellishing, and making glorious the dwelling-place of His invisible presence, doing it with that severity, gravity, and awe, which a chastened heart and sober thoughts will teach us.

SERMON XXI.

OFFERINGS FOR THE SANCTUARY.

ISAIAH lx. 13.

The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary, and I will make the place of My feet glorious.

EVERY attentive reader of Scripture must be aware what stress is there laid upon the duty of costliness and magnificence in the public service of God. Even in the first rudiments of the Church, Jacob, an outcast

* Neh. xiii. 14.

and wanderer, after the vision of the Ladder of Angels, though it not enough to bow down before the Unseen Presence, but parted with, or, as the world would say, wasted a portion of the provisions he had with him for the way, in an act of worship. Like David, he did not "offer unto the Lord of that which cost him nothing;" but like that religious woman at the opening of a more gracious Covenant, though he had not "an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious," yet he did "what he could;" making a sacrifice less than hers in its costliness, greater in his own destitute condition, for he "took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it."*

What Jacob did as a solitary pilgrim, David as a wealthy king, Mary as a private woman, is pressed upon us, both in sacred history and in prophecy, as fulfilled under the Law, as foretold of the Gospel. The Book of Exodus shows what cost was lavished upon the Tabernacle even in the wilderness: the Books of Kings and Chronicles set before us the devotion of heart, the sedulous zeal, the carelessness of expense or toil, with which the first Temple was reared upon Mount Sion, in the commencement of the monarchy of Israel. "Now have I prepared," says David, "*with all my might* for the house of my God, the gold . . and the silver . . and the brass . . the iron . . and wood . . onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of diverse colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I *have set my affection* to the house of my God, I have *of my own proper good*, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the Holy House." And he "rejoiced with great joy," and "blessed the Lord," because the people also "*offered willingly*, because *with perfect heart* they offered willingly to the Lord." And Solomon, when he came to use these costly offerings, sent to another country for "a cunning man," "skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson: also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which should be put to him, with the cunning men in Judah and in Jerusalem."† Such was the outward splendour of the Jewish Sanctuary; nor were the glories of the Christian to be less outward and visible, though they were to be more spiritual also. The words of the Prophet in the text are but one instance out of several, of the promise of temporal magnificence made to that Covenant which was to be eternal. "The glory of Lebanon," says Isaiah, addressing the

* Gen. xxviii. 18.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 2, 3, 9, 10. 2 Chron. ii. 7. 14.

Gospel Church, "shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of My Sanctuary, and I will make the place of My feet glorious." Again; "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." And again; "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones."* Now if it be said that some of these expressions are figurative, this may be true; but still the very fact that such figures are used in the prophecy, would seem to show that the materials literally denoted may be suitably used in its fulfilment, unless indeed, such use is actually forbidden. They do not cease to be figures because they are seen as well as spoken of. Real gold is as much a figure in the Church, as the mention of it is such in Scripture; and it is surely in itself dutiful and pleasant thus to make much of the words of inspired truth; and, moreover, the mere circumstances that, when the Gospel came, Christians did thus proceed, and sanctified the precious things of this world to religious uses, looks like the fulfilment of the prophecy, and is of the nature of an authoritative command.

However, it may be objected that every attentive reader of Scripture must be familiar with this circumstance also, that such outward splendour in the worship of God is spoken of in terms of censure or jealousy by our Lord and Saviour. Thus He says, when enumerating the offences of the Pharisees, "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye make clean the *outside* of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." And again; "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." And when His disciples pointed out to our Lord the great size of the stones of which the Temple was built,—a Temple, let it be noted, thus ornamented by the impious Herod,—He answered abruptly, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."†

These passages certainly should be taken into account; but what do they mean? did our Saviour say that magnificence in worshipping God, magnificence in His house, in its furniture, and in its decorations, is wrong, wrong since He has come into the world? Does He discourage us from building handsome Churches, or beautifying the ceremonial of

* Isai. lx. 17, 18; liv. 11, 12.

† Matt. xxiii. 25, 27; xxiv. 2.

religion? Did He exhort us to niggardness? did He put a slight on architectural skill? did He imply we should please Him the more, the less study and trouble we gave to the externals of worship? In rejecting the offering of Herod, did He forbid the devotion of Christians?

This is what many persons think. I do not exaggerate when I say, that they think the more homely and familiar their worship is the more spiritual it becomes. And they argue, that to aim at external beauty in the service of the Sanctuary, is to be like the Pharisees, to be fair without and hollow within; that whereas the Pharisees pretended a sanctity and religiousness outside which they had not inside, therefore every one who aims at outward religion sacrifices inward.

This is a consideration worth dwelling on; not indeed for its own weight, but because it weighs with so many people. The objection is this; because the hollow Pharisees were outwardly holy, therefore every one who is outwardly is, or is in danger of becoming a Pharisee.

Now, to take a parallel instance, most of us perhaps have heard a proverb, that "cleanliness is next to godliness;" which means, that the habit spoken of is of a moral nature, at least accidentally, and a moral excellence, and that those who are deficient in it are commonly deficient also in other and more religious excellences also. Who among us will not admit that nothing is more unwelcome, nay, under circumstances, nothing raises more serious and anxious thoughts, than the absence of neatness and what is called tidiness, in appearance and dress? We can often tell at once how young persons are conducting themselves by the first glance at them. Alas! we read what is painful in their history; we read of a change in their religious state, in the disorder of their look, and the negligence of their gait. Or enter a village school: are we not at once pleased with a neat and bright-faced child? and do we not at once take a dislike to such as are not so?

But, now, suppose any one were to come to us and say, "This is all outside; what God requires is a clean heart, not a neat appearance;" would this seem a pertinent objection? We should answer, surely, that what our duty requires of us is cleanness of heart *and* decency of attire also; that the one point of duty does not interfere with the other; nay, on the contrary, that inward exactness and sanctity are likely to *show* themselves in this very way,—in propriety of appearance and that if persons who are exact in their lives are, notwithstanding, negligent in their persons, this ought not to be so, and we wish it were otherwise.

But supposing the objector went on to say that those who were neat and respectable in their persons and homes had often very bad tempers, were ever making a *point* of being neat, and what is called "particular," and quarreled with every one who interfered with their own

habits and ways. We should answer, that if so, it was to be lamented ; but still, in spite of this, it was a right thing to be neat, and a wrong thing to be slovenly ; that exactness within best showed itself in exactness without, and that cleanliness was the natural and most appropriate attendant on godliness.

And again ; supposing the objector in question said that propriety in dress became love of finery ; that those who attended to their persons became vain ; that it was impossible to be neat and respectable without going on to dress gaily, and making a show to attract the attention of others. We should answer that all this ought not to be, and was very wrong ; that vanity was a great sin ; that those who studied their dress disobeyed our Lord's command not to think about raiment, and were exposing themselves to temptations, and were going forth they knew not whither, going the way of death, going the way to become reckless, as about greater matters, so about dress itself. *This* we should say ; but we should add, that such considerations did not prove that neatness and decency were not praiseworthy, but that love of finery was perilous, and vanity sinful.

But supposing the objector supported what he said by Scripture ; supposing he said, for instance, that our Lord blamed persons who washed their hands before eating bread, and that this proves that washing the hands before a meal is wrong. I am taking no fictitious case ; such objections really have been made before now : yet the answer surely is easy, namely, that our Saviour objected, not to the mere washing of the hands, but to the making too much of such an observance ; to our thinking it religion, thinking that it would stand in the stead of inward religion, and would make up for sins of the heart. This is what He condemned, the show of great attention to outward things, *while* inward things, which were more important, were neglected. This He says Himself, in His denunciation of the Pharisees. " These ought ye to have done," He says, "*and not* to leave the other," the inward, "*undone*." He says expressly they ought to do the outward, but they ought to do more. They did the one and not the other ; they ought to have done both the one and the other.

Now, apply this to the case of beautifying Churches :—as is neatness and decency in an individual, such is decoration in a Church ; and as we should be offended at slovenliness in an individual, so ought we to be offended at disorder and neglect in our Churches. It is quite true, men *are* so perverse, (as the Pharisees were,) that they sometimes attend only to the outward forms, and neglect the inward spirit ; they may offer to Him costly furniture and goodly stones, while they are cruel, or bigoted ;—just as persons may be neat in their own persons

and houses and yet be ill-tempered and quarrelsome. Or, again, they may carry their attention to the outward forms of religion too far, and become superstitious ; just as persons may carry on a love of neatness into love of finery. And, moreover, Scripture speaks against the hypocrisy of those who are religious outwardly, while they are disobedient,—just as it speaks against those who wash their hands while their heart is defiled. But still, in spite of all this, propriety in appearance and dress is a virtue,—is next to godliness ; and, in like manner, decency and reverence are to be observed in the worship of God, and are next to devotion, in spite of its being true that all are not holy who are grave and severe, all not devout who are munificent.

What Scripture reproves is the *inconsistency*, or, what it more solemnly calls, the *hypocrisy*, of being fair without and foul within ; of being religious in appearance, not in truth. It was one offence not to be religious, it was a second to pretend to be religious. “Ye fools,” says our Lord, “did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also ?” Such as a man is outwardly, such should he be inwardly. “How can ye, being evil, speak good things ? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man, out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things ; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.”* The light of divine truth, when in the heart, ought to beam forth outwardly ; and when a man is dark within, well were it that he should show himself outwardly what he is. Such as a man is inside, such should be his outside. Well ; but do you not see that such a view of doctrine condemns not only those who affect outward religion without inward, but those also who affect inward without outward ? For, if it is an inconsistency to pretend to religion outwardly, while we neglect it inwardly, it is also an inconsistency, surely, to neglect it outwardly while we pretend to it inwardly. It is wrong, surely, to believe and not to profess ; wrong to put our light under a bushel. St. Paul says expressly, “If thou shalt *confess with thy mouth* the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”† Belief is not enough ; we must confess. Nor must we confess with our mouth only ; but by word and by deed, by speech and by silence, by doing and by not doing, by walk and conversation, when in company and when alone, in time and in place, when we labour and when we rest, when we lie down and when we rise up, in youth and in age, in life and in death,—and, in like manner in the world and in Church. Now, to adorn the worship of God our Saviour,

* Luke xi. 40. Matt. xii. 34, 35.

† Rom. x. 9.

to make the beauty of holiness visible, to bring offerings to the Sanctuary, to be curious in architecture, and reverent in ceremonies,—all this external religion is a sort of profession and confession; it is nothing but what is natural, nothing but what is consistent, in those who are cultivating the life of religion within. It is most unbecoming, most offensive in those who are not religious; but most becoming, most necessary, in those who are so.

Persons who put aside gravity and comeliness in the worship of God, that they may pray more spiritually, forget that God is a Maker of *all* things, *visible* as well as invisible; that He is the Lord of our bodies as well as of our souls; that He is to be worshipped in public as well as in secret. The Creator of this world is none other than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; there are not two Gods, one of matter, one of spirit; one of the Law and one of the Gospel. There is one God, and He is Lord of all we are, and all we have; and therefore, all we do must be stamped with his seal and signature. We must begin, indeed, with the heart; for out of the heart proceed all good and evil; but while we begin with the heart, we must not end with the heart. We must not give up this visible world, as if it came of the evil one. It is our duty to change it into the kingdom of heaven. We must manifest the kingdom of heaven upon earth. The light of divine truth must proceed *from* our hearts, and shine out *upon* everything we are, and everything we do. It must bring the *whole* man, soul and body, into captivity to Christ. They who are holy in spirit, are holy in body. They who submit their wills to Christ, bow their bodies; they who offer the heart, bow the knee; they who have faith in His Name, bow the head; they who honour His cross inwardly, are not ashamed of it before men. They who rejoice *with* their brethren in their common salvation, and desire to worship together, *build a place* to worship in, and they build it as the *expression* of their feelings, their mutual love, their common reverence. They build a building, which will, as it were, speak; which will profess and confess Christ their Saviour; which will herald forth His death and passion at first sight; which will remind all who enter that we are saved by His cross, and must bear our cross after Him. They will build what may tell out their deepest and most sacred thoughts, which they dare not utter in word: not a mis-shapen building, not a sordid building, but a noble dwelling, a palace all-glorious within; unfit, indeed, for God's high Majesty, whom even the heaven of heavens cannot contain, but fit to express the feelings of the builders,—a Temple which may stand and (as it were) preach to all the world while the world lasts; which may show how they desire to praise, bless, and glorify their eternal Benefactor; how they desire to gain others to praise Him also; a

building which may cry out to all passers by, "O, magnify the Lord our God, and fall down before His footstool, for He is holy ! O, magnify the Lord our God, and worship Him upon His holy hill, for the Lord our God is Holy !"*

This, then, is the real state of the case ; and when our Lord blamed the Pharisees as hypocrites, it was not for attending to the outside of the cup, but for not attending to the inside also.

Now, in answer to the parallel I have been drawing out, it may be objected, that " if the decoration of God's public service be like the personal duty of propriety in dress and demeanour, then decoration is wrong, when it is intentional and studied. Those who are anxious how they look, and what others think of them, are in the way to be vain, if they are not so already ; decorum should be the *spontaneous* result of inward exactness ; grace in manner and apparel the mere outward image of harmony and purity of soul. Therefore, holy persons attire themselves with simplicity, speak with modesty, behave with gravity. Their ease, and their amiableness, and their severity, and their composure, and their majesty are as little known to themselves as the features of their countenance. If, then, the parallel holds, external religion becomes excessive as soon as it is made an object ; and this, of course, becomes practically an argument against all consecration of wealth and of art to the worship of God." One single remark, however, is sufficient to invalidate this objection ; for, let it be observed, in making much of our own appearance, we are contemplating ourselves ; but in making much of the ceremonial of religion, we are contemplating another, and Him our Maker and Redeemer. This is so obvious and decisive a distinction, that I should not care to notice the argument which has led me to mention it, except that it will open upon us a further consideration connected with our subject. For it so happens that, at present, far from acknowledging its force, it is the way of the world to be most sensitively jealous of over-embellishment in the worship of God. but to have no scruples or misgivings whatever of an excess of splendour and magnificence in their own apparel, houses, furniture, equipages, and establishments.

I say it is the way with us Englishmen, who are the richest people upon earth, to lay out our wealth upon ourselves ; and when the thought crosses our minds, if it ever does, that such an application of God's bounties is unworthy those who are named after Him who was born in a stable, and died upon the Cross, we quiet them by asking, " What is the use of all the precious things which God has given us, if we may not

* Psalm xcix. 5. 9.

enjoy them?" The earth overflows with beauty and richness, and man is gifted with skill to improve and perfect what he finds in it. What delicate and costly things do the streets of any rich town present to our eyes! what bales of merchandise! what fine linen! what silks from afar! what precious metals! what jewels! what choice marbles! and what exquisite workmanship, making what is in itself excellent, of double worth! "What," it is inquired, "*can* be done with all this bounty of Providence? has He not poured it all lavishly into our hands? was it given, except to be used? And what is true of the more precious things, is true of the less precious; it is true of such things as come in the way of ordinary persons; the luxuries of opulence are, in their degree, offered to all of us, as if we were opulent, for we partake in the common opulence of our country; why, then, may we not enjoy the gifts of nature and art, which God has given?"

I have already suggested the true answer to this difficulty. The earth is full of God's wonderful works, do you say, and what are we to do with them? what do with marbles, and precious stones, gold and silver, and fine linen? Give them to God. Render them to Him from whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. This is their proper destination. Is it a better thing to dress up our sinful bodies in silk and jewels, or to ornament therewith God's House and God's ritual? Does any one doubt what all these excellent things are meant for? or, at least, can he doubt what they are *not* meant for? not meant, surely, for sinners to make themselves fine withal. What presumption would that be, what senselessness? Does not the whole world speak in praise of God? Does not every star in the sky, every tree and flower upon earth, all that grows, all that endures, the leafy woods, the everlasting mountains, speak of God? Do not the pearls in the sea, and the jewels in the rocks, and the metals in the mine, and the marbles in the quarry,—do not all rich and beautiful substances everywhere witness of Him who made them? Are they not His work, His token, His glory? Are they not a portion of a vast natural Temple, the heavens, earth, and sea,—a vast Cathedral for the Bishop of our souls, the All-sufficient Priest, who first created all things, and then again, became, by purchase, their Possessor? Does it not strike you, then, as extreme presumption, and a sort of sacrilege, to consecrate them to any one's glory but God's? If we saw things aright, could there be a more frightful spectacle, an instance of more complete self-worship, a more detestable idolatry, than men and women making themselves fine that others might admire them? keeping all these things for self, denying them to the rightful Owner? viewing them as if mere works of "nature," as they are sometimes called, and incapable of any religious purpose? Recollect Herod; he was

smitten by the Angel and eaten of worms, because he gave not God the glory ; and *how* did he withhold it ? By arraying himself in royal apparel, making an oration, and being patient of the cry, "It is the voice of a God and not of a man." The royal apparel was imputed to him as a sin, because he used it, not to remind himself that he was God's minister, but to impress upon the people that he was a god. And every one, high and low, who is in the practice of dressing ostentatiously, whether in silk or cotton, that is, every one who dresses to be looked at and admired, is using God's gifts for an idol's service, and offering them up to self.

No ; let us master this great and simple truth, that all rich materials and productions of this world, being God's property, are intended for God's service ; and sin only, nothing but sin, turns them to a different purpose. All things are His ; He in His bounty has allowed us to take freely of all that is in the world, for food, clothing, and lodging ; He allows us a large range, He afflicts us not by harsh restrictions ; He gives us a discretionary use, for which we are answerable to Him alone. Still, after all permission, on the whole we must not take what we do not need. We may take for life, for comfort, for enjoyment ; not for luxury, not for pride. Let us give Him of His own, as David speaks ; let us honour Him, and not ourselves. Let the house of God be richly adorned, for it is His dwelling-place ; priests, for they represent Him ; kings, magistrates, judges, heads of families, for they are His ministers. These are called gods in Scripture, and "all that is called God or that is worshipped," may receive of His gifts whose Name they bear. Nothing, however rich, is sinful, which has a religious meaning ; which reminds us of God, or of the absent, whom we revere or love,—or of relations or friends departed ; or which is a gift, and not a purchase. In proportion as we disengage it from the thought of self, and associate it with piety towards others, do we succeed in sanctifying it.

Hence it is that while Abraham sent jewels to Rebekah, and Jacob made Joseph a coat of many colours, St. Paul gives his judgment "that women adorn themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety, not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array ;" and St. Peter, that their "adorning" should not be "that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart."* Or again ; compare the Book of Ezekiel with the Apocalypse, and you will see the right and the wrong use of earthly magnificence instanced in the city of Antichrist and Holy Jerusalem. God's judgments are denounced upon Tyre by the Prophet, for being

* 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4.

proud of her wealth and spending it on herself. "Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God ; every precious stone was thy covering ; the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and gold." And what followed or was implied in this ? "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty ; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness ; I will cast thee to the ground." On the other hand, of new Jerusalem we read also, that the foundations of her wall "were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third a chalcedony, the fourth an emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth a topaz, the tenth a chrysoprasus, the eleventh a jacinth, the twelfth an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls ; every several gate was of one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold as it were transparent glass." And all this suitably ; for it was God's city, "and the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof."*

Let us then, on the whole, learn from what has been said this lesson : —to be at least as exact and as decent in the service of God, as we are in our own persons and our own homes ; and if we are in possession of precious things besides, let us rather devote them to God than keep them for ourselves. And let us never forget that all we can give, though of His creation, is nothing worth in comparison of the more precious gifts which He bestows on us in the Gospel. Though our Font and Altar were of costly marbles, though our communion vessels were of gold and jewels, though our walls were covered with rich tapestries, what is all this compared to Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, present here, but unseen ! Let us use visible things not to hide, but to remind us of things invisible ; and let us pray Him, that while we cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, He will give us the Living Bread from heaven, and the Wine, which is His Blood.

* Ezek. xxviii. 13. 17. Rev. xxi. 19—23.

SERMON XXII.

THE WEAPONS OF SAINTS.

MATTHEW xix. 30.

Many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

THESE words are fulfilled under the Gospel in many ways. Our Saviour in one place applies them to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles; but in the context in which they stand as I have cited them, they seem to have a further meaning, and to embody a great principle, which we all indeed acknowledge, but are deficient in mastering. Under the dispensation of the Spirit all things were to become new and to be reversed. Strength, number, wealth, philosophy, eloquence, craft, experience of life, knowledge of human nature, these are the means by which worldly men have ever gained the world. But in that kingdom which Christ has set up, all is contrariwise. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." What was before in honour, has been dishonoured; what before was in dishonour, has come to honour; what before was successful fails, what before failed succeeds. What before was great has become little, what before was little has become great. Weakness has conquered strength, for the hidden strength of God "is made perfect in weakness." Death has conquered life, for in that death is a more glorious resurrection. Spirit has conquered flesh; for that spirit is an inspiration from above. A new kingdom has been established, not merely different from all kingdoms before it, but contrary to them; a paradox in the eyes of man,—the visible rule of the invisible Saviour.

This great change in the history of the world is foretold or described in very many passages of Scripture. Take, for instance, St. Mary's Hymn, which we read every evening; she was no woman of high estate, the nursling of palaces and the pride of a people, yet she was chosen to an illustrious place in the kingdom of heaven. What God

began in her was a sort of type of His dealings with His Church. So she spoke of His "scattering the proud," "putting down the mighty," "exalting the humble and meek," "filling the hungry with good things," and "sending the rich empty away." This was a shadow or outline of that kingdom of the Spirit, which was then coming on the earth.

Again ; when our Lord, in the beginning of His ministry, would declare the great principles and commandments of His kingdom, how did He express Himself ? Turn to the Sermon on the Mount. "He opened His mouth, and said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the meek, blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."* Poorness was to bring into the Church the riches of the Gentiles ; meekness was to conquer the earth ; suffering was "to bind their kings in chains and their nobles with links of iron."

On another occasion He added the counterpart ; "Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation ; wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger ; wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep ; wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets."†

St. Paul addresses the Corinthians in the same tone : "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called : But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty ; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are : that no flesh should glory in His presence."‡

Once more ; consider the Book of Psalms, which, if any part of the Old Testament, belongs immediately to Gospel times, and is the voice of the Christian ; what is the one idea in that sacred book of devotion from beginning to end ? This : that the weak, the oppressed, the defenceless shall be raised to rule the world in spite of its array of might its threats, and its terrors ; that "the first shall be last, and the last first."

Such is the kingdom of the sons of God ; and while it endures, there is ever a supernatural work going on, by which all that man thinks great is overcome, and what he despises prevails.

Yes, so it is ; since Christ sent down gifts from on high, the Saints are ever taking possession of the kingdom, and with the weapons of Saints. The invisible powers of the heavens, truth, meekness, and righteousness, are ever coming in upon earth, ever pouring in, gathering, thronging, warring, triumphing, under the guidance of Him who

* Matt. v. 2—10.

† Luke vi. 24—26.

‡ 1 Cor. i. 26—29.

"is alive and was dead, and is alive for evermore." The beloved disciple saw Him mounted on a white horse, and going forth "conquering and to conquer." "And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations, and He shall rule them with a rod of iron."*

Now let us apply this great truth to ourselves ; for, be it ever recollected, *we* are the sons of God, *we* are the soldiers of Christ. The kingdom is within us, and among us, and around us. We are apt to speak of it as a matter of history ; we speak of it as at a distance ; but really we are a part of it, or ought to be ; and, as we wish to be a living portion of it, which is our only hope of salvation, we must learn what its characters are in order to imitate them. It is the characteristic of Christ's Church, that the first should be last, and the last first ; are we realizing in ourselves and taking part in this wonderful appointment of God ?

Let me explain what I mean ; we have most of us by nature longings, more or less, and aspirations after something greater than this world can give. Youth, especially, has a natural love of what is noble and heroic. We like to hear marvellous tales, which throw us out of things as they are, and introduce us to things that are not. We so love the idea of the invisible, that we even build fabrics in the air for ourselves, if heavenly truth be not vouchsafed us. We love to fancy ourselves involved in circumstances of danger or trial, and acquitting ourselves well under them. Or we imagine some perfection, such as earth has not, which we follow, and render it our homage and our heart. Such is the state more or less of young persons before the world alters them, before the world comes upon them, as it often does very soon, with its polluting, withering, debasing, deadening influence, before it breathes on them, and blights, and parches, and strips off their green foliage, and leaves them, as dry and wintry trees without sap or sweetness. But in early youth we stand with our leaves and blossoms on, which promise fruit ; we stand by the side of the still waters, with our hearts beating high, with longings after our unknown good, and with a sort of contempt for the fashions of the world ; with a contempt for the world, even though we engage in it. Even though we allow ourselves in our degree to listen to it, and to take part in its mere gaieties and amusements, yet we feel the while that our happiness is not there ; and we have not yet come to think, though we are in the way to think, that all that is beyond this world is after all an idle dream. We are

* Rev. xix. 14, 15.

on our way to think it, for no one stands where he was; his desires after what he has not, his earnest thoughts after things unseen, if not fixed on their true objects, catch at something which he does see, something earthly and perishable, and seduce him from God. But I am speaking of men *before* that time, before they have given their hearts to the world, which promises them true good, then cheats them, and then makes them believe that there is no truth anywhere, and that they were fools for thinking it. But before that time, they have desires after things above this world, which they embody in some form of this world, because they have no other way of making them more than a shadow. If they are in humble life, they dream of becoming their own masters, rising in the world, and securing an independence; if in a higher rank, they have ambitious thoughts of gaining a name and exercising power. While their hearts are thus unsettled, Christ comes to them, if they will receive Him, and promises to satisfy their great need, this hunger and thirst which wearies them. He does not wait till they have learned to ridicule high feelings as mere romantic dreams: He comes to the young; He has them baptized betimes, and then promises them, and in a higher way, those unknown blessings which they yearn after. He seems to say, in the words of the Apostle, "What ye ignorantly worship, that declare I unto you." You are seeking what you see not, I give it you; you desire to be great, I will make you so; but observe how,—just in the reverse way to what you expect; the way to real glory is to become unknown and despised.

He says, for instance, to the aspiring, as to His two Apostles, "Whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."* Here is our rule. The way to mount up is to go down. Every step we take downward, makes us higher in the kingdom of heaven. Do you desire to be great? make yourselves little. There is a mysterious connection between real advancement and self-abasement. If you minister to the humble and despised, if you feed the hungry, tend the sick, succour the distressed; if you bear with the froward, submit to insult, endure ingratitude, render good for evil, you are, as by a divine charm, getting power over the world and rising among the creatures. God has established this law. Thus He does His wonderful works. His instruments are poor and despised; the world hardly knows their names, or not at all. They are busied about what the world thinks petty actions, and no one minds them. They are apparently set on no great

* Matt. xx. 26—28.

works ; nothing is seen to come of what they do : they seem to fail. Nay even as regards religious objects which they themselves profess to desire, there is no natural and visible connection between their doings and sufferings and these desirable ends ; but there is an unseen connection in the kingdom of God. They rise by falling. Plainly so, for no condescension *can* be so great as that of our Lord *Himself*. Now the more they abase themselves the more *like* they are to Him, and the more like they are to Him, the greater must be their power with Him.

When we once recognise this law of God's providence we shall understand better, and be more desirous to imitate, our Lord's precepts, such as the following :—

“ Ye call Me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet ; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.” And then our Lord adds : “ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”* As if He should say to us of this day. You know well that the Gospel was at the first preached and propagated by the poor and lowly against the world's power ; you know that fishermen and publicans overcame the world. You know it ; you are fond of bringing it forward as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel, and of enlarging on it as something striking, and a topic for many words ; happy are ye if ye yourselves fulfil it ; happy are ye if *ye* carry on the work of those fishermen ; if ye in your generation follow them as they followed Me, and triumph over the world and ascend above it by a like self-abasement.

Again : “ When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room ; . . . but when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher : then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee ; for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”† Here is a rule which extends to whatever we do. It is plain that the spirit of this command leads us, as a condition of being exalted hereafter, to cultivate here all kinds of little humiliations ; instead of loving display, putting ourselves forward, seeking to be noticed, being loud or eager in speech, and bent on having our own way, to be content, nay, to rejoice in being made little of, to perform what to the flesh are servile offices, to think it enough to be barely suffered among men, to be

* John xiii. 13—17.

† Luke xiv. 8, 10, 11.

patient under calumny ; not to argue, not to judge, not to pronounce censures, unless a plain duty comes in ; and all this because our Lord has said that such conduct is the very way to be exalted in His presence.

Again, " I say unto you, that ye resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."* What a precept is this ? why is this voluntary degradation ? what good can come to it ? is it not an extravagance ? Not to *resist* evil is going far ; but to court it, to turn the left cheek to the aggressor and to offer to be insulted ! what a wonderful command ! what ? must we take pleasure in indignities ? Surely we must ; however difficult to understand it, however arduous and trying to practise it. Hear St. Paul's words, which are a comment on Christ's : " Therefore I *take pleasure* in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake ;" he adds the reason ; "*for when I am weak, then am I strong.*"† As health and exercise and regular diet are necessary to strength of the body, so an enfeebling and afflicting of the natural man, a chastising and afflicting of soul and body, are necessary to the exaltation of the soul.

Again : St. Paul says, " Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is Mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head."‡ As if he said, *This is a Christian's revenge ; this is how a Christian* heaps punishment and suffering on the head of his enemy ; viz. by returning good for evil. Is there pleasure in seeing an injurer and oppressor at your feet ? has a man wronged you, slandered you, tyrannized over you, abused your confidence, been ungrateful to you ? or to take what is more common, has a man been insolent to you, shown contempt of you, thwarted you, outwitted you, been cruel to you, and you feel resentment,—and your feeling is this, " I wish him no ill, but I should like him just to be brought down for this, and to make amends to me ;" rather say, hard though it be, " I will overcome him with love ; except severity be a duty, I will say nothing, do nothing ; I will keep quiet, I will seek to do him a service ; I owe him a service, not a grudge ; and I will be kind, and sweet, and gentle, and composed ; and while I cannot disguise from him that I know well where he stands, and where I, still this shall be with all peaceableness and purity of affection." O hard duty, but most blessed ! for even to take into account the *pleasure* of revenge, such as it is, is there not greater grati-

* Matt. v. 39.

† 2 Cor. ii. 10.

‡ Rom. xii. 19, 20.

fication in thus melting the proud and injurious heart, than in triumphing over it outwardly, without subduing it within? Is there not more of true enjoyment, in looking up to God, and calling Him (so to speak,) as a witness of what is done, and having His Angels as conscious spectators of your triumph, though not a soul on earth knows any thing of it, than to have your mere carnal retaliation of evil for evil known and talked of, in the presence of all, and more than all, who saw the insult or heard of the wrong?

The case is the same as regards poverty, which it is the fashion of the world to regard not only as the greatest of evils, but as the greatest *disgrace*. Men count it a disgrace, because it certainly does often arise from carelessness, sloth, imprudence, and other faults. But, in many cases, it is nothing else but the very state of life in which God has placed a man; but still, even then, it is equally despised by the world. Now if there is one thing clearly set forth in the Bible it is this, that "Blessed are the poor." Our Saviour was the great example of poverty; He was a poor man. St. Paul says, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."* Or consider St. Paul's very solemn language about the danger of wealth: "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."† Can we doubt that poverty is under the Gospel *better* than riches? I say *under* the Gospel, and *in* the regenerate, and *in* the true servants of God. Of course out of the Gospel, among the unregenerate, among the lovers of this world, it matters not whether one is rich or poor; a man is any how unjustified, and there is no better or worse in his outward circumstances. But, I say, *in Christ* the poor is in a more blessed lot than the wealthy. Ever since the Eternal Son of God was born in a stable, and had not a place to lay his head, and died an outcast and as a malefactor, heaven has been won by poverty, by disgrace, and by suffering. Not by these things in themselves, but by faith working in and through them.

These are a few out of many things which might be said on this most deep and serious subject. It is strange to say, but it is a truth which our own observation and experience will confirm, that when a man discerns in himself most sin and humbles himself most, when his comeliness seems to him to vanish away and all his graces to wither, when he feels disgust at himself, and revolts at the thought of himself, —seems to himself all dust and ashes, all foulness, and odiousness,

* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

† 1 Tim. vi. 10.

then it is that he is really rising in the kingdom of God : as it is said of Daniel, "From the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words."*

Let us then, my brethren, understand our place, as the redeemed children of God. Some *must* be great in this world, but wo to those who make themselves great ; wo to any who take one step out of their way with this object before them. Of course no one is safe from the intrusion of corrupt motives ; but I speak of persons *allowing* themselves in such a motive, and acting mainly from such a motive. Let this be the settled view of all who would promote Christ's cause upon earth. If we are true to ourselves, nothing can really thwart us. Our warfare is not with carnal weapons, but with heavenly. The world does not understand what our real power is, and where it lies. And until we put ourselves into its hands of our own act, it can do nothing against us. Till we leave off patience, meekness, purity, resignation, and peace, it can do nothing against that truth which is our birthright, that cause which is ours, as it has been the cause of all saints, before us. But let all who would labour for God in a dark day beware of any thing which ruffles, excites, and in any way withdraws them from the love of God and Christ, and simple obedience to Him.

This be our duty in the dark night, while we wait for the day ; while we wait for Him who is our Day, while we wait for His coming, who is gone, who will return, and before whom all the tribes of the earth will mourn, but the sons of God will rejoice. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."† It is our blessedness to be made like the all-holy, all-gracious, long-suffering, and merciful God ; who made and who redeemed us ; in whose presence is perfect rest, and perfect peace ; whom the Seraphim are harmoniously praising, and the Cherubim tranquilly contemplating, and Angels silently serving, and the Church thankfully worshipping. All is order, repose, love, and holiness in heaven. There is no anxiety, no ambition, no resentment, no discontent, no bitterness, no remorse, no tumult. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee ; because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for with the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."‡

* Dan. x. 12.

† 1 John iii. 2, 3.

‡ Is. xxvi. 3, 4.

SERMON XXIII.

FAITH WITHOUT DEMONSTRATION.

JOHN iv. 48.

Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

WE are now celebrating the last great Festival in the course of Holy Services which began in Advent; the Feast of the Ever-blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whose mercy has planned, accomplished, and wrought in us "life and immortality." And the present Festival has this peculiarity in it,—that it is the commemoration of a mystery. Other Festivals celebrate mysteries also, but not because they are mysteries. The Annunciation, the birth of Christ, His death on the Cross, His Resurrection, the descent of the Holy Ghost, are all mysteries; but we celebrate them, not on this account, but for the blessings which we gain from them. But to-day we celebrate, not an act of God's mercy towards us, but, forgetting ourselves, and looking only upon Him, we reverently and awfully, yet joyfully, extol the wonders, not of His works, but of His own Nature. We lift up heart and eyes towards Him, and speak of what He is in Himself. We dare to speak of His everlasting and infinite Essence: we directly contemplate a mystery, the deep unfathomable mystery of the Trinity in Unity.

Doubtless, from that deep mystery proceeds all that is to benefit and bless us. Without an Almighty Son we are not redeemed,—without an Ever-present Spirit we are not justified and sanctified. Yet, on this day, we celebrate the mystery for its own sake, not for our sake.

On this day, then, we should forget ourselves, and fix our thoughts upon God. Yet men are not willing to forget themselves; they do not like to become, as it were, nothing, and to have no work but faith. They like argument and proof better; they like to be convinced of a truth to their own satisfaction before they receive it, when, perhaps, such satisfaction is impossible. This happens in the sacred subject be-

fore us. The solemn mystery of the Trinity in Unity is contained in Scripture. We all know this ; there is no doubt about it. Yet, though it be in Scripture, it does not follow that every one of us should be a fit judge whether and where it *is* in Scripture. It may be contained there fully, and yet we not able to see it fully, for various reasons. Now this is the great mistake which some persons fall into ; they think, because the doctrine is maintained as being in Scripture by those who maintain it as true, that therefore they have a right to say that *they* will not believe it till it is proved to *them* from Scripture. It is nothing to them that the great multitude of good and holy men in all ages have held it. They act like Thomas, who would not believe his brother Apostles that our Lord was risen, till he had as much proof as they, and who said, "Except I see and touch for myself, I will not believe." And they are like the Jews whom our Lord reproves in the text, saying, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." They call it an enlightened, rational belief, to demand for themselves proof from Scripture before they believe ; and they think that any other admission of the doctrine is blind and superstitious, and unacceptable to Almighty God.

And when, perhaps, we have gone so far as to indulge them, and to profess that we *are* willing to prove the doctrine from Scripture to their satisfaction, and that, as a previous step to their believing and worshipping, then they meet us with such shallow and light-minded questions as the following,—“Where in Scripture do you find the word Trinity ?” “Why do you insist upon it, if it is not in Scripture ?” Again, “Where is the Holy Ghost expressly and plainly called God, in Scripture ?” Again, “Where does Scripture speak of One Substance, Three Persons, as the Athanasian Creed speaks ? Where does Scripture say that the Son and the Holy Ghost are uncreate ? where, that “the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal ?” And so they go through the whole of our divine faith, carping, objecting, and traducing, even though they do not mean it ; and all for this,—because they *will* be judges themselves what is in Scripture, and what not ; what necessary to salvation, and what not ; what words are important, and what not ; what sources of instruction God has given besides Scripture, and what not.

Now, on such conduct, I observe as follows :—that they who think it unreasonable to believe without proof, are surely unreasonable themselves in so thinking. What warrant in reason, what right have they, to say that they will not believe the Creed unless it is proved to *them* to be in Scripture ? They profess to act by reason. Well, then, I

ask them, Is it according to reason to say, that they will not believe the Creed without reasons drawn out to their satisfaction from Scripture? I think not; I think I can prove that it is not. I think a very few words will make it evident, that they are unreasonable and inconsistent in refusing to believe before they see the Scripture proof.

1. I would ask, in the first place, whether we reason and prove before we act, in the affairs of this life? For instance, we are bound to obey the laws; we know that we shall get into great trouble if we do not; that if we break them, loss of property or imprisonment will be the consequence; so that it is of great importance that we should obey them; and we know that these laws are not always obvious to common sense; so that, at times, a person may break them with the best intentions possible, if he act upon his own private notions of right and wrong. Accordingly, every now and then you find persons, under particular circumstances, alarmed lest they should be unawares breaking the law; and what do they then do? they consult some one skilled in the law, who has made the law his study and profession. It never occurs to a man so circumstanced to buy law books, and to make out the truth of any important matter for himself, though it is really contained in law books. No; neither in ordinary nor in extraordinary matters does he trust his own judgment how the law stands. In ordinary matters he thinks it safe to go by the opinion of men in general; in extraordinary, he consults men learned in the law, feeling too vividly how much is at stake to trust *himself*. It is not that he doubts, for an instant, that the laws of the land *are* put into writing, and are to be found in law books, and might be drawn out of them; but he distrusts *himself*. He distrusts, not the law books, but his own ability. There is too great a risk,—too much at stake,—his property, his character, his person, are at stake. He cannot afford, in such a case, to indulge his love of argument, disputation, and criticism. No; this love of argument can only be indulged in a case in which we have no fears. It is reserved for religious subjects. Such subjects differ from all other practical subjects, as being those on which the world feels free to speculate, because it does not *fear*. It has no fears about religious doctrine, no keen sensibilities; it does not feel, though it may confess, that its eternal interests are at stake. It suspends its judgment; for what matters it to the world whether it makes up its mind on a point of religion, or no? It can *afford* to say, “I will not believe till I see proof in Scripture for believing,” though it does not say, “I will not believe lawyers till I understand the law,” because it sees clearly and feels deeply that the law of the land is a real power, and that to come into collision with it is a real disaster; but it does not see

and feel that "the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Men well understand that they will be sure to suffer from human law, for all they cannot judge of it by themselves, on the ground that they can, if they choose, get other competent men to judge them; but they cannot be made to feel that they will hereafter have to answer for having been told the truth, however, or from whatever quarter, they were told it,—at Church, or from teachers, or from religious books. They act as if it were no matter what they knew, unless they came to know it in one particular way, through Scripture.

Now, surely, this parallel holds most exactly, unless one or other of two things could be shown,—unless we have reason for thinking, first, that it matters not *what* we believe; or, secondly, that no faith is acceptable in the case of individuals which does not arise from their own *personal inferences* from Scripture. Let, then, ground be produced for either of these two positions,—that correct faith is unimportant, or that personal faith must be built upon argument and proof. Till then, surely the general opinion of all men around us, and that from the first, the belief of our teachers, friends, and superiors, and of all Christians in all times and places, that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity must be held in order to salvation, is as good a reason for our believing it ourselves, even without being able to prove it in all its parts from Scripture; I say, this general reception of it by others, is as good a reason for accepting it without hesitation, considering the fearful consequences which may follow from not accepting it, as the general belief how the law stands and the opinion of skilful lawyers about it is a reason for following their view of the law, though we cannot verify that view from law books.

2. But it may here be said, that the cases are different in this respect,—that the commonly-received notions about what the law of the land is, do not impose upon our belief anything improbable or difficult to accept, but that the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity is mysterious and unlikely; and, therefore, though it is reasonable to go by what others say in legal matters, it is not reasonable to go by others in respect to this doctrine. Now, on the contrary, I consider that this mysteriousness is, as far as it proves anything, a recommendation of the doctrine. I do not say that it is true, *because* it is mysterious; but that if it *be* true, it cannot help being mysterious. It would be strange indeed, as has often been urged in argument, if any doctrine concerning God's infinite and eternal Nature were not mysterious. It would even

be an objection to any professed doctrine concerning His Nature, if it were not mysterious. That the sacred doctrine, then, of the Trinity in Unity is mysterious, is no objection to it, but rather the contrary ; the only objection that can plausibly be urged is, why, if so, should it be revealed ? why should we be told *anything* about God's Adorable Nature, if incomprehensible He is, and mysterious the doctrine about Him must be ? This, it is true, we *may* ask ; though can we ask it piously and reverently ? how can *we* be judges what He will do on such a point ? how can *we*, worms of the earth, and creatures of a day, pretend to determine what is most suitable to Him to tell, what is best for us to know, when He condescends to reveal Himself to us ? Is it not enough for us that He speaks to us at all ? and cannot we consent to leave Him (if I may so express myself) to speak to us in His own way ? Whether, then, He will reveal to us anything about His own Nature or no, our reason cannot determine ; but this it can determine, that *if* He does, it will be mysterious. It is no *objection*, then, I repeat, to the doctrine, that it is mysterious ; and it is no reason, therefore, against receiving it on the general belief of others, that it is mysterious. It is not more improbable that the doctrine should be what it is, than that the law of the land should be what it is ; and as we believe the testimony of others about the law, without having studied the law, so we may well receive the doctrine of the Trinity on the testimony of our friends and superiors, our Church, all good men, learned men, and men in general, though *we* have not learning, attainments, or leisure sufficient to draw it for our ourselves from Scripture. It is not stranger that the testimony of others should be our guide as to the next world, than that it is our guide in this.

This is the first answer that I should make to this objection ; but now I will give another, which will open the state of the case more fully.

I suppose, then, there is no one who has not heard, and no one but would be shocked at seeing, what is called an Atheist, that is, a person who denies that there is any God at all. We should be shocked, not from any unchristian feeling towards the unhappy man who blasphemed his Maker and Saviour, but, without thinking of *him*, we should feel that Satan alone could be the author of such an impiety, and we should be sure that we had close beside us a very special manifestation of Satan. We should be shocked to think how very low human nature could fall, when it so yielded to the temptations of Satan. Such would be our feelings, and surely very right ones ; yet, perhaps, the unhappy man in question, quite unconscious himself of his great misery, as unconscious as persons who deny the doctrine of the Trinity are of

theirs (for this is the property of Satan's delusions,) that the men seized by them do not suspect that they are delusions, I say, this man, altogether unconscious what a mournful object he was to all believers, might begin to argue and dispute in his defence, and his argument might be such as the following:

"You tell me that I must believe in a God, but I want this doctrine *proved* to my satisfaction before I believe it. It is very unreasonable in you to deal with me in any other way. Nay, you have gone against reason in the case of your own faith. For which of you has ever set about proving that God exists? which of you has not believed it before proving it? You believe it because you have been taught it. But prove to me the truth of this doctrine from the world which we see and touch, from the course of nature and of human affairs, and then I will believe it."

Now is it not a very happy thing that men are not accustomed to speak in this way? why, if so, all our life would be spent in proving things; our whole being would be one continued disputation; we should have no time for action; we should never get so far as action. Some things, nay, the greatest things, must be taken for granted, unless we make up our minds to fritter away life, doing nothing. But to return to the particular case before us;—should we think ourselves weak and dull in not seeking proof that God exists before believing it, or the man in question miserable in needing it? Yet, if he persisted, and was of an acute and subtle mind, is it not plain, that abundant as is the evidence of God's existence, providence, power, wisdom, and love, on the face of nature and in human affairs, yet it would not at all be easy to prove it to *him*, not merely to *his* satisfaction, but to *our* satisfaction either. Clearly as we should feel the evidence, we should not be able to bring out the proof so as to come up to our own notions what a proof *ought* to be, and we should be disappointed with our own attempt.

For, let us see how this man would argue,—after all, I scarcely like to say what he would urge, lest I should speak in a way unsuitable to this sacred place, and yet it may be useful to hint at one or two things, by way of showing *how much* we shall be bound in consistency to admit, if we grant a man need believe nothing for which he cannot receive a clear and convenient proof,—he will say then thus:

"You tell me that there is but one God; and you tell me to look abroad into the world, and I shall see proofs of it. I do look abroad, and I see good *and* evil. I see the proof, then, of two gods, a good God, and another, evil. I see two principles struggling with each other." This shocking doctrine has before now been held by those who were determined to prove to themselves everything before they be

lieved ; and when it is a question of argument and disputation, blasphemous as it is, much that is plausible can be said for it. For evil certainly has a kingdom of its own in the world ; it seems to have a place here, and to act on system. Even Scripture calls Satan the god of this world ; not meaning that he is really god of it, (God forbid !) but that he has usurped the power of it, and seems to be god of it. If, then, every one is bound to prove his faith for himself before believing, then he is bound, not only to prove for himself the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity from Scripture, but he must first prove from the face of the world the doctrine of the Unity ; and, as in the first case, he will, unless properly qualified, be in great risk of perplexing himself and denying that God is Three, so will he, in the latter, run great risk of denying that God is One. And it is to be feared that it is only because men have the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to speak against, that they do not speak against the doctrine of the Unity ; they *will* doubt and cavil about some thing or other ; and were revealed religion not before them, then they would speak against natural religion, as in other times and places they have already done.

Again ; the deluded man I am supposing will continue his bad arguments as follows : “ You tell me that God is almighty ; now you may prove Him to be mighty, but how do you prove Him to be almighty ? You cannot prove more than you see, and you must be *all-seeing* to judge of what is *almighty*.” Again : “ You say that God is infinite ; but all you can know on the subject is, that the Intelligence that created the world surpasses your comprehension ; but by how much, whether infinitely, you cannot know, you cannot prove.” Again : “ You tell me to believe that God had no beginning ; this is incomprehensible ; I do not now what you mean ; I cannot take in the sense of your words. It is as easy to believe the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, as that God had no beginning. And there is less proof for it than for the doctrine of the Trinity ; for, at least, there *is* proof in Scripture for that doctrine, but what possible proof can you pretend to bring from the face of the world that God was from everlasting ?”

Now I do not see how such an objector can be answered satisfactorily, if he is pertinacious. You meet, indeed, with books written to prove to us (as they profess) the being of an Almighty, Infinite, Everlasting God, from what is seen in the natural world, but they do *not* strictly prove it ; they do but recommend, evidence, and confirm the doctrine to those who believe it already. They do not make an approach to a complete argumentative proof of it. They are obliged to pass over, or take for granted, many of the most important points in the doctrine. They are, doubtless, useful to Christians, as far as they

tend to enliven their devotion, to strengthen their faith, to excite their gratitude, and to enlarge their minds ; but they are little or no evidence to unbelievers. And, in saying all this, I must not be understood to say, that the course of the world does not justly impress upon us the doctrine of One True, Infinite, and Almighty God : it does so ; but that the proof is too deep, subtle, complex, indirect, delicate, and spiritual, to be analyzed and brought out into formal argument, level to the comprehension of the multitude of men. And I say the same of the proof of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Scripture. A humble, teachable, simple, believing mind, will imbibe the doctrine from Scripture, how it knows not, as we drink in the air without seeing it ; but when a man wants formal grounds for his belief laid before him in a definite shape, and has little time for reflection and study, and little learning or cultivation of mind, then, I say, he can do little better than to fall back upon his impressions instead of proof, on the belief of all around him, and on the testimony of all ages.

Let us, then, learn from this Festival to walk *by faith* ; that is, not to ask jealously and coldly for strict arguments, but to follow generously what has fair evidence for it, even though it might have fuller or more systematic evidence. It is in this way that we all believe that there is a God. A subtle infidel might soon perplex any one of us. Of course he might. Our very state and warfare is one of faith. Let us aim at, let us reach after and (as it were) catch at the things of the next world. There is a voice within us, which assures us that there is something higher than earth. We cannot analyze, define, contemplate what it is that thus whispers to us. It has no shape or material form. There is that in our hearts which prompts us to religion, and which condemns and chastises sin. And this yearning of our nature is met and sustained, it finds an object to rest upon, when it hears of the existence of an All-powerful, All-gracious Creator. It incites us to a noble faith in what we cannot see.

Let us exercise a similar faith, as regards the mysteries of revelation also. Here is the true use of Scripture in leading us to the truth. If we read it humbly and inquire teachably, we shall find ; we shall have a deep impression on our minds that the doctrines of the Creed are, there, though we may not be able to put our hands upon particular texts, and say how much of it is contained here and how much there. But, on the other hand, if we read in order to *prove* those doctrines, in a critical, argumentative way, then all traces of them will disappear from Scripture as if they were not there. They will fade away insensibly like hues at sunset, and we shall be left in darkness. We shall come to the conclusion that they are not in Scripture, and shall

perhaps, boldly call them unscriptural. Religious convictions cannot be forced ; nor is divine truth ours to summon at will. If we *determine* that we will find it out, we shall find nothing. Faith and humility are the only spells which conjure up the image of heavenly things into the letter of inspiration ; and faith and humility consist, not in going about to prove, but in the outset confiding on the testimony of others. Thus afterwards on looking back, we shall find we have proved what we did not set out to prove. We cannot control our reasoning powers, nor exert them at our will or at any moment. It is so with other faculties of the mind also. Who can command his memory ? The more you try to recall what you have forgotten, the less is your chance of success. Leave thinking about it, and perhaps memory returns. And in like manner, the more you set yourself to argue and prove, in order to discover truth, the less likely you are to reason correctly and to infer profitably. You will be caught by sophisms, and think them splendid discoveries. Be sure, the highest reason is not to reason on system, or by rules of argument, but in a natural way ; not with formal intent to draw out proofs, but trusting to God's blessing that you may gain a right impression from what you read. If your reasoning powers are weak, using the argumentative forms will not make them stronger. It will enable you to dispute acutely and to hit objections, but not to discover truth. There is nothing creative, nothing progressive in exhibitions of argument. The utmost they do is to enable us to state well what we have already discovered by the tranquil exercise of our reason. Faith and obedience are the main things ; believe and do, and pray to God for light, and you will reason well without knowing it.

Let us not then seek for signs and wonders ; for clear, or strong, or compact, or original arguments ; but let us *believe* ; evidence will come after faith as its reward, better than before it as its groundwork. Faith soars aloft ; it listens for the notes of heaven, the faint voices or echoes which scarcely reach the earth, and thinks them worth all the louder sounds of cities or of schools of men. It is foolishness in the eyes of the world ; but it is a foolishness of God wiser than the world's wisdom. Let us embrace the sacred mystery of the Trinity in Unity, which, as the Creed tells us, is the ground of the Catholic religion. Let us think it enough, let us think it far too great a privilege, for sinners such as we are, for a fallen people in a degenerate age, to inherit the faith once delivered to the Saints ; let us accept it thankfully ; let us guard it watchfully ; let us transmit it faithfully, to those who come after us.

S E R M O N X X I V .

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

MATTHEW xxviii. 19.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

THAT in some real sense the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are They whom we are bound to serve and worship, from whom comes the Gospel of grace, and in whom the profession of Christianity centres, surely is shown, most satisfactorily and indisputably, by the words of this text. When Christ was departing, He gave commission to His Apostles, and taught them what to teach and preach; and first of all they were to introduce their converts into His profession, or into His Church, and that by a solemn rite, which, as He had told Nicodemus at an earlier time, was to convey a high spiritual grace. This solemn and supernatural ordinance of discipleship was to be administered in the Name—of whom? in the Name (can we doubt it?) of Him whose disciples the converts forthwith became; of that God whom, from that day forward, they confessed and adored; whom they promised to obey; in whose word they trusted; by whose bounty they were to be rewarded. Yet when Christ would name the Name of God, He does but say, “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” I consider, then, that on the very face of His sacred words there is a difficulty, *till* the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is known. What can be meant by saying, in the Name, not of God, but of Three? It is an unexpected manner of speech.

Now even if it were merely said, “of the Father and the Son,” there would surely be a difficulty in the terms of His command. We might indeed suppose that He meant thereby to denote the Supreme Lord of all, and the instrument and mediator of His mercies in the dispensation then commencing, (as we read of the Israelites “believing God and His servant Moses,” and “worshipping the Lord and the king,” David;) but surely even then it would be strange and inexplica-

ble that Christ should say, "the Father and Son," and not "God and the Son," or "God and Christ," or the like; whereas the Name of God does not occur at all, and the words used instead are what are called *correlatives*, one implies the other, they look from one to the other. There is no mention of a Fount of mercies and a channel, and that, towards man the recipient; but it is like the statement of some sacred doctrine which has its meaning in itself, independently of man or of any economy of mercy towards him; and the force of this remark is increased by our Lord's making mention, in addition, of the Holy Ghost, which much confirms this impression that the Three Sacred Names introduced have a meaning relatively to each other, and not to any temporal dispensation. Did the text run, "in the Name of God, Jesus Christ, and the Comforter," I do not say that this would have overcome the difficulty, or that it would be satisfactory to interpret it of an Author of grace and His instruments; but at all events there is far more difficulty, or rather an insuperable difficulty, in such an interpretation of the text as Christ actually spoke it. And then, considering that if there is one boon above another which a convert might naturally claim of an Apostle, it was to know *whom* he was to worship, *whose* servant he was to become, *who* was to be his God, now that he had abandoned idols; (as, for instance, Moses said, "When I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they shall say to me, *What is His name?* what shall I say unto them?" and Almighty God acknowledged that the request was right by granting it; and as Jacob said, "Tell me, I pray thee, Thy *Name?*" and as Manoah said, "What is Thy *Name?*" and as, in accordance with these instances, St. Paul said to the Athenians, "Whom ye *ignorantly worship*, Him declare I unto you;") I say, with these considerations before us, we might have expected that there would have been in the Baptismal form a clear and simple announcement of the Christian's God, such as this, "In the Name of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, *unless* the Catholic doctrine of the Holy Trinity be true. If indeed so it be, as the Church has ever taught, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are the one God into whose service Christians are enrolled, then good reason They should be named upon the convert on his initiation. In that case there is no difficulty; the sacred form of words precisely answers to the worshipper's question, "What is Thy Name?" to the Apostle's promise, "Him declare I unto you:" but on the supposition, which impugnors of the doctrine maintain, that by "Son" is meant our Lord's human nature, and that the Holy Spirit is not God or not a person, certainly a great and unexpected, and (I may say, humanly

speaking,) unnecessary obscurity hangs over the first act of the Gospel teaching.

Nor let it be objected to Catholic believers, that there can be no greater obscurity than a mystery; and that the Sacred Truth which they confess is a greater perplexity to the convert than any which can arise from considerations such as I have been insisting on. For the point I have been urging, is the improbability that our Lord should introduce an obscurity of *mere words*, with none existing in fact, which is the case in the heretical interpretation; and that He should prefer to speak so darkly when He might have spoken simply and intelligibly; whereas, if there be an eternal mystery in the Godhead, such as we aver, then, from the nature of the case, there could not but be a difficulty in the words in which He revealed it. Christ, in that case, makes no mystery for the occasion; He uses the plainest and most exact form of speech which human language admits of.* And this deserves notice; for it may be extended to the details of this great Catholic doctrine, of which I propose presently to give some brief account. I mean that, much as is idly and profanely said against the Creed of St. Athanasius as unintelligible, yet the real objection which misbelievers feel, if they spoke correctly, is, that it is too plain. No sentences can be more simple, nor statements more precise, than those of which it consists. The difficulty is not in any one singly; but in their combination. And herein lies a remarkable difference between the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and some modern dogmatic statements on other points, some true and some not true, which have been at times put forward as necessary to salvation. Much controversy, for instance, has taken place in late centuries about the doctrine of justification and about faith; but here endless perplexities and hopeless disputes arise, as we all know, as to what is meant by "faith," and what by "justification;" whereas most of the *words* used in the Creed to which I have referred are only common words used in their common sense, as "Lord," and "God," "eternal" and "almighty," "one" and "three;" nor again are the statements difficult. There is no difficulty, except such as is in the nature of things, in the adorable mystery spoken of, which no wording can remove or explain.

And now I propose to state the doctrine, as far as it can be done, in few words, in the mode in which it is disclosed to us in the text of Scripture; in doing which, if I shall be led on to mention one or two points of detail, it must not be supposed, as some persons strangely mistake, as if such additional statements were intended for *explanation*:

* Οὐκ ἔστιν αἰνιγμα, ἀλλὰ μυστήριον θεῖον. Athan. Orat. i. 41.

whereas they leave the great Mystery just as it was before, and are only useful as impressing on our mind *what* it is which the Catholic Church means to assert, and to make it a matter of real faith and apprehension, and not a mere assemblage of words.

And first, I need scarcely say, considering how often it is told us in Scripture, that God is one. "Hear, O Israel," says Moses, "the Lord our God is one Lord." "To us there is but one God the Father," says St. Paul. Again, "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all." Again, "One God, and one Mediator between God and men."* Now, it may be asked, in what sense "one?" for we speak of things being one which really are many; as Scripture speaks of all Christians being made *one* body; of God being made at *one* with sinners; of God and man being *one* Christ; and of *one* Baptism, though administered to multitudes. I answer, that God is one in the simplest and strictest sense, as all Scripture shows; this is true, whatever else is true; not in any nominal or secondary sense; but one, as being individual; as truly one as any individual soul or spirit is one; nay, infinitely more truly, because all creatures are imperfect, and He has all perfection. In Him there are no parts or passions, nothing begun or incomplete, nothing by communication, nothing of quality, nothing which admits of increase, nothing common to others. He is separate from all things, and whole, and perfect, and simple, and like Himself and none else; and one, not in name or by figure, or by accommodation, or by abstraction, but one in Himself, or, as the Creed speaks, one in substance or essence. All that He is, is Himself, and nothing short of Himself; His attributes are He. Has He wisdom? this does but mean that He is wisdom. Has He love? that is, "God is love," as St. John speaks. Has He omnipresence? that is, He is omnipresent. Has He omniscience? He is all-knowing. Has He power? He is almighty. He is holy, and just, and true, and good, not in the way of qualities of His essence, but holiness, justice, truth and goodness, are all one and the self-same He, according as He is contemplated by His creatures in various aspects and relations. We men are incapable of conceiving of Him as He is; we cannot attain to more than glimpses, accidental or partial views of His Infinite Majesty, and these we call by different names, as if He had attributes, and were of a compound nature; and thus He deigns in mercy to us to speak of Himself, using even human, sensible, and material terms; as if He could be angry, who is not touched by evil; or could repent, in whom is no variableness;

* Deut. vi. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 5, 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

or had eyes, or arms, or breath, who is a Spirit ; whereas He is at once and absolutely all perfection, and whatever is He, is all He is, and He is Himself always and altogether.

Thus we must ever commence in all our teaching concerning the Holy Trinity ; we must not begin by saying that there are Three, and then afterwards go on to say that there is One, lest we give false notions of the nature of that One ; but we must begin by laying down the great Truth that there is One God in a simple and strict sense, and then go on to speak of Three, which is the way in which the mystery was progressively revealed in Scripture. In the Old Testament we read of the Unity ; in the New, we are enlightened in the knowledge of the Trinity.

And here, let it be observed, that we have a sort of figure or intimation of the sacred Mystery of the Trinity in Unity even in what has been now said concerning the Divine Attributes. For as the Attributes of God are many in one mode of speaking, yet all One in God ; so, too, there are Three Divine Persons, yet these Three are One. Let it not be for an instant supposed that I am *paralleling* the two cases, which is the Sabellian heresy ; but I use the one in *illustration* of the other ; and, in way of illustration, I observe as follows : When we speak of God as Wisdom, or as Love, we mean to say that He is Wisdom, and that He is Love ; that He is each separately and wholly, yet not that Wisdom is the same as Love, though He is both at once. Wisdom and Love stand for ideas quite distinct from each other, and not to be confused, though they are united in Him. In all He is and all He does, He is Wisdom and He is Love ; yet it is both true that He is but One, and without qualities, and withal true again that Love is not Wisdom. Again, as God is Wisdom or Love, so is Wisdom or Love in and with God, and whatever God is. Is God eternal ? so is His wisdom. Is He unchangeable ? so is His wisdom. Is He uncreate, infinite, almighty, all-holy ? His wisdom has these characteristics also. Since God has no parts or passions, whatever is really of or from God, is all that He is. If there is confusion of language here, and an apparent play upon words, this arises from our incapacity in comprehension and expression. We see that all these separate statements must be true, and if they result in an apparent contrariety with each other, this we cannot avoid ; nor need we be perplexed about them, nor shrink from declaring any one of them. The simple accuracy of statement which would harmonize all of them is beyond us, because the power of contemplating the Eternal, as He is, is beyond us. We must be content with what we can see, and use it for our practical

guidance, without caring for the apparent contradiction of terms involved in our profession.

A second illustration may be taken from the material images which Scripture condescends to employ. We read of the eye of God, and the arm of God. Now we know that man has an eye and an arm as really parts of him, and not as figures ; but let us suppose for a moment that his body were made spiritual, what would be the consequence ? What really would follow we cannot say, for it is beyond us ; but, since a spirit has no parts, we may *conceive* that all those separate organs of man's body which at present exist, instead of having a local disposition in it any longer, and springing out of it by extension, would be all one, though all distinct still. A spiritual body might possibly be all eye, all ear, all arm, all heart ; yet not as if all these were confused together, and names only ; not as if henceforth there were no seeing, no hearing, no working, and no feeling, but because a spirit has no parts in extension, and is what it is all at once. And I notice this, because it shows us that things may really exist in a subject which we are contemplating, though they look like ideas only or notions created by our own minds. As a body need not be supposed to lose eye and hand by becoming spiritual, but its organs might exist in it as truly as before, because it was a body, but in a new manner, because it was spiritual, so as to seem like mere abstractions or unreal qualities ; so may we suppose that though God is a Spirit and One, yet He may be also a Trinity : not as if that Trinity were a name only, or stood for three manifestations, or qualities, or attributes, or relations,—such mere ideas or conceptions as we may come to form when contemplating God ;—but that, as in that body which had become spiritual, eye and hand would not be abstractions after the change, because they were not before it, nor would eye necessarily be the same as the hand, though the body was all eye and all hand ; so, (if we may dare to use human illustrations on this most sacred subject,) the Eternal Three, (I do not say *in the same way*, for I am not attempting to explain *how* the mystery is, but to bring out distinctly *what* we mean by it,) the Eternal Three, I say, are worshipped by the Catholic Church as distinct, yet One ; the Most High God being wholly the Father, and wholly the Son, and wholly the Holy Ghost ; yet the Three Persons being distinct from each other, not merely in name, or by human abstraction, but in very truth, as truly as a fountain is distinct from the stream which flows from it, or the root of a tree from its branches.

Now should any one be tempted to say that this is dark language, and difficult speculation to set before a Christian people, I answer that it is not more dark and difficult than the sacred mystery which is our

great subject to-day ; that it is in fact but the *exposition* of the sacred mystery as the Church has received it ; that I am not engaged in defending the Creed of St. Athanasius, but stating its meaning ; and that you may well bear, My Brethren, once in the year, to be reminded that Christianity gives exercise to the whole mind of man, to our highest and most subtle reason, as well as to our feelings, affections, imagination, and conscience. If we find it tries us, and is too severe, whether for our reason, or our imagination, or our feelings, let us bow down in silent adoration, and submit to it each of our faculties by turn, not complain of its sublimity or its range. And now to proceed :—

We hear much in the Old Testament of those attributes of God of which I have already spoken. His omnipotence : “ I am the Almighty God ; walk before Me, and be thou perfect.” Self-existence : “ And God said unto Moses, I Am that I Am : thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Am hath sent me unto you.” Holiness : “ Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders !” His mercy, and justice, and faithfulness : “ The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” Awful majesty : “ that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God.” Truth : “ His truth endureth from generation to generation.” Omnipresence : “ If I climb up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I go down to hell, Thou art there also.” Omniscience : “ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Knowledge of the heart : “ Thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men.” Mysteriousness : “ Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour.” Eternity : “ Thus saith the High and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy.”* These are some out of numberless announcements in the Old Testament of the Divine Attributes ; and though every thing concerning the Supreme Being is mysterious, yet we do not commonly feel any mystery here, cause we see a sort of parallel to these attributes in what we call the qualities, properties, powers, and habits of our own minds. We are endowed by nature and through grace with a portion of certain excellences which belong in perfection to the Most High,—as benevolence, wisdom, justice, truth, and holiness ; and though we do not know how these attributes exist in God, nay how they exist in ourselves, yet since we are ourselves used to them, and cannot deny their existence, we are

* Gen. xvii. 1. Exod. iii. 14. xv. 11. xxxiv. 6, 7. Deut. xxviii. 58. Ps. c. 4. cxxxix. 7. Prov. xv. 3. 2 Chron. vi. 30. Isa. xlv. 15. lvii. 15.

not startled when we are told they exist in God. But there are certain other disclosures made to us concerning the Divine Nature, even from the first page of Scripture, and growing in definiteness as revelation proceeds, of which we have no image or parallel in ourselves, and which in consequence we feel to be strange and startling, and call unintelligible because we are not used to them, and mysterious because we cannot account for them. Thus in the history of the creation we read : "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters ;" who shall say how this awful intimation is to be interpreted ? who but will "desire to look into" such deep things, yet be silent from conscious weakness till he hears the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, which explains to him the inspired text by revealing the mystery ? Again we read, that, when Jacob had wrestled with the Angel, "he called the name of the place Peniel," for he had seen God's Face or Countenance, "and," he adds, "my life is preserved." And Almighty God promised Moses, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And again Moses asks, "I beseech Thee, show me Thy Glory. And He said, I will make all My Goodness pass before thee . . . thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." And we are told that "the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord." And the Psalmist says, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the Breath of His mouth." And Wisdom says in the Proverbs, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way ; before His works of old, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was . . . I was by Him, as one brought up with Him, and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him." And in the prophet Isaiah we read, "Awake, awake, put on strength, O Arm of the Lord ;" and again, "I have covered thee in the shadow of My Hand."* Now any one such expression once or twice used might not have excited attention ; but this mention of the Word, and Wisdom, and Presence, and Glory, and Spirit, and Breath, and Countenance, and Arm, and Hand of the Almighty is too frequent, and with too much of personal characteristic, to be dutifully passed over by the careful reader of Scripture ; and in matter of fact it did, before Christ came, attract the attention of Jewish believers, as is proved to us most clearly by some remarkable passages in the books of Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, to which I need not do more than allude."†

* Gen. i. 2. xxxii. 30. Exod. xxxiii. 14—20. 1 Sam. iii. 21. Ps. xxxiii. 6. Prov. viii. 22, 23. 30. Isa. li. 9, 16.

† Wisdom vii. 14, et seq. ; Eccclus. xxiv. 3, et seq.

It would appear, then, from the revelations of the Old Testament, than while God is in His essence most simply and absolutely one, yet there is a real sense in which He is not one, though created natures do not, cannot, furnish such representations of Him as to enable us to acquiesce in the conclusions to which the Scripture announcements inevitably lead. We understand things unknown, by the pattern of things seen and experienced; we are able to contemplate Almighty God so far as earthly things are partial reflections of Him; when they fail us, we are lost. And as of course nothing earthly or created is His exact and perfect image, we have at best but dim glimpses of His infinite glory; and if Scripture reveal to us aught concerning Him, we must be content to take it on faith, without comprehending how it is, or having any clear understanding of our own words. When it declares to us that God is wise and good, we form some idea of what is meant from the properties and habits which attach to the human soul; when we read of His arm or eye, we have some faint, though unworthy shadow of the truth in the members and organs of the human body; but when we read of His Spirit, or Word, or Presence, as at once very distinct from Him, yet most intimately one with Him,—more intimately one than our properties are one with our souls, more real and distinct than the members and organs of our bodies,—we feel the weight of that mystery, which exists also when mention is made of the Divine Wisdom, or the Divine Arm, though we feel it not.

And this Mystery, which the Old Testament obscurely signifies, is in the New clearly declared; and it is this,—that the God of all who is revealed in the Old Testament, is the Father of a Son from everlasting, called also His Word and Image, of His substance, and partaker of all His perfections, and equal to Himself, yet without being separate from Him, but one with Him; and that from the Father and the Son proceeds eternally the Holy Spirit, who also is of one substance, divinity, and majesty with Father and Son. Moreover we learn that the Son or Word is a Person,—that is, is to be spoken of as “He,” not “it,” and can be addressed: and that the Holy Ghost also is a Person. Thus God subsists in Three Persons, from everlasting to everlasting; first, He is the Father, next He is the Son, next He is the Holy Ghost; and the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost the Father. And God is these Three, and nothing else; that is, He is either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost. Moreover, God is as wholly and entirely God in the Person of the Father, as though there were no Son and Spirit; as entirely in that of the Son, as though there were no Spirit and Father; as entirely in that of the Spirit, as though there were no Father and Son. And the Fa-

ther is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, while there is but One God ; and that without an inequality, because there is but One God, and He is without parts or degrees ; though how it is that that same Adorable Essence, indivisible, and numerically One, should subsist perfectly and wholly in each of Three Persons, no words of man can explain, nor earthly illustration typify.

Now the passages in the New Testament, in which this Sacred Mystery is intimated to us, are such as these. First, we read, as I have said already, that God is One ; next, that He has an Only-begotten Son ; further, that this Only-begotten Son is “ in the bosom of the Father ;” and that “ He and the Father are One.” Further, that He is also the Word ; that “ the Word is God, and is with God ;” moreover, that the Son is in Himself a distinct Person, in a real sense, for He has taken on Him our nature, and become man, though the Father has not. What is all this but the doctrine, that that God who is in the strictest sense One, is both entirely the Father, is entirely the Son ? or that the Father is God, and the Son God, yet but One God ? Moreover, the Son is the express “ Image” of God, and He is “ in the form of God,” and “ equal with God ;” and “ he that hath seen Him, hath seen the Father,” and “ He is in the Father, and the Father in Him.” Moreover the Son has all the attributes of the Father : He is “ Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty ;” “ by Him were all things created, visible and invisible ;” “ by Him do all things consist ; none but He “ knoweth the Father,” and none but the Father “ knoweth the Son.” He “ knoweth all things ;” He “ searcheth the hearts and the reins ;” He is “ the Truth and the Life ;” and He is the Judge of all men.

And again, what is true of the Son is true of the Holy Ghost ; for He is “ the Spirit of God ;” He “ proceedeth from the Father ;” He is in God as “ the spirit of a man that is in him ;” He “ searcheth all things, even the deep things of God ;” He is “ the Spirit of Truth ;” the “ Holy Spirit ;” at the creation, He “ moved upon the face of the waters :” “ Whither shall I go,” says the Psalmist, “ from Thy Spirit ?” He is the Giver of all gifts, “ dividing to every man severally as He will ;” we are born again, “ of the Spirit.” To resist divine grace is to grieve, to tempt, to resist, to quench, to do despite to the Spirit. He is the Comforter, Ruler, and Guide of the Church ; He reveals things to come ; and blasphemy against Him hath never forgiveness. In all such passages, it is surely implied both that the Holy Ghost has a Personality of His own, and that He is God.

And thus, on the whole, the words of the Creed hold good, that “there

is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one,—the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. And in this Trinity, none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal; so that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped.”

Lastly, it is added, “He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity;” on which I make two remarks, and so conclude. First, what is very obvious, that such a declaration supposes that a person has the opportunity of believing. We are not speaking of heathens, but of Christians; of those who are taught the truth, who have the offer of it, and who reject it. Accordingly, we do not contemplate in this Creed cases of imperfect or erroneous teaching;—or of what may be called misformation of the reason; or any case of invincible ignorance; but of a man’s wilful rejection of what has been fairly set before him. Secondly, when the Creed says that we “must think *thus* of the Trinity,” it would seem to imply, that it had been drawing out a certain clear, substantive, consistent, and distinctive view of the doctrine, which is the Catholic view; and that, in opposition to other views of it, whether Sabellian, or Arian, or Tritheistic, or others that might be mentioned; all of which, without denying in words the Holy Three, do deny Him in fact and in the event, and involve their wilful maintainers in the anathema which is here proclaimed, not in harshness, but as a faithful warning, and a solemn protest.

May we never speak on subjects like this without awe; may we never dispute without charity; may we never inquire without a careful endeavour, with God’s aid, to sanctify our knowledge, and to impress it on our hearts, as well as to store it in our understandings!

SERMON XXV.

PEACE IN BELIEVING.

ISAIAH vi. 3.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts

EVERY Lord's day is a day of rest, but this, perhaps, more than all. It commemorates, not an act of God, however gracious and glorious, but His own unspeakable perfections and adorable mysteriousness. It is a day especially sacred to peace. Our Lord left His peace with us when He went away; "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you;"* and He said He would send them a Comforter, who should give them peace. Last week we commemorated that Comforter's coming; and to-day, we commemorate in an especial way His great gift, in that great doctrine which is its emblem and its means." These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation."† Christ here says, that instead of this world's troubles, He gives His disciples peace; and, accordingly, in to-day's Collect, we pray that we may be kept in the faith of the Eternal Trinity in Unity, *and* be "defended from all adversities," for in keeping that faith we are kept from trouble.

Hence, too, in the blessing which Moses told the priests to pronounce over the children of Israel, God's Name is put upon them, and that three times, in order to bless and keep them, to make His face shine on them, and to give them peace. And hence again, in our own solemn form of blessing, with which we end our public service, we impart to the people "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and "the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

God is the God of peace, and in giving us peace He does but give Himself, He does but manifest Himself to us; for His presence is

* John xiv. 27.

† John xvi. 33.

peace. Hence our Lord, in the same discourse in which He promised His disciples peace, promised also, that "He would come and manifest Himself unto them," that "He and His Father would come to them, and make Their abode with them."* Peace is His everlasting state; in this world of space and time He has wrought and acted; but from everlasting it was not so. For six days He wrought, and then he rested according to that rest which was His eternal state; yet not so rested, as not in one sense to "work hitherto," in mercy and in judgment towards that world which He had created. And more especially, when He sent His Only-begotten Son into the world, and that most Gracious and All-pitiful Son, our Lord, condescended to come to us, both He and His Father wrought with a mighty hand; and They vouchsafed the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and He also wrought wonderfully, and works hitherto. Certainly the whole economy of redemption is a series of great and continued works; but still they all tend to rest and peace, as at the first. They began out of rest, and they end in rest. They end in that eternal state out of which they began. The Son was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, as His dearly-beloved and Only-begotten. He loved Him before the foundation of the world. He had glory with Him before the world was. He was in the Father, and the Father in Him. None knew the Son but the Father, nor the Father but the Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." He was "the brightness of God's glory and the express Image of His Person;" and in this unspeakable Unity of Father and Son, was the Spirit also, as being the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son; the Spirit of Both at once, not separate from them, yet distinct, so that they were Three Persons, One God, from everlasting.

Thus was it, we are told, from everlasting; before the heavens and the earth were made, before man fell or Angels rebelled, before the sons of God were formed in the morning of creation, yea, before there were Seraphim to veil their faces before Him and cry "Holy;" He existed without ministers, without attendants, without court and kingdom, without manifested glory, without anything but Himself; He His own Temple, His own infinite rest, His own supreme bliss, from eternity. O wonderful mystery! O the depth of His majesty! O deep things which the Spirit only knoweth! Wonderful and strange to creatures who grovel on this earth, as we, that He, the All-powerful, the All-wise, the All-good, the All-glorious, should for an eternity, for years without end, or rather, apart from time, which is but one of His

* John xiv. 21. 23.

creatures, that He should have dwelt without those through whom He might be powerful, in whom He might be wise, towards whom He might be good, by whom He might be glorified. O wonderful, that all His deep and infinite attributes should have been without manifestation! O wonderful thought, and withal, O thought comfortable to us worms of the earth, as often as we feel in ourselves and see in others gifts which have no exercise, and powers which are quiescent. He, the All-powerful God, rested from eternity, and did not work; and yet, why not rest, wonderful though it be, seeing He was so blessed in Himself? why should *He* seek external objects to know, to love, and to commune with, who was all-sufficient in Himself? How could He need fellows, as though He were a man, when He was not solitary, but had ever with Him His Only-begotten Word in whom He delighted, whom He loved ineffably, and the Eternal Spirit, the very bond of love and peace, dwelling in and dwelt in by Father and Son? Rather how was it that He ever began to create, who had a Son without beginning and without imperfection, whom He could love with a perfect love? what exceeding exuberance of goodness was it that *He* should deign at length to surround Himself with creation, who had need of nothing, and to change His everlasting silence for the course of Providence and the conflict of good and evil! I say nothing of the apostacies against Him, the rebellions and blasphemies which men and devils have committed. I say nothing of that unutterable region of woe, the prison of the impenitent, which is to last for eternity, coeval with Him henceforth, as if in rivalry of His blissful heaven. I say nothing of this, for God cannot be touched with evil; and all the sins of those reprobate souls cannot impair His everlasting felicity. But, I ask, how was it that He who needed nothing, who was all in all, who had infinite Equals in the Son and the Spirit, who were One with Him, how was it that He created His Saints, but from simple love of them from eternity? Why should He make man in the Image of God, whose Image already was the Son, All-perfect, All-exact, without variableness, without defect, by a natural propriety and unity of substance? And when man fell, why did He not abandon or annihilate the whole race, and create others? why did He go so far as to begin a fresh and more wonderful dispensation towards them, and, as He had wrought marvellously in Providence, work marvellously also in grace, even sending His Eternal Son to take on Him our fallen nature, and to purify and renew it by His union with it, but that, infinite as was His own blessedness, and the Son's perfection, and man's unprofitableness, yet, in His loving-kindness, He determined that unprofitable man should be partaker of the Son's perfection and His own blessedness?

And thus it was that, as He had made man in the beginning, so also He redeemed Him ; and the history of this redemption we have been tracing for the last six months in our sacred Services. We have gone through in our memory the whole course of that Dispensation of active providences which God, in order to our redemption, has superinduced upon His eternal and infinite repose. First, we commemorated the approach of Christ, in the weeks of Advent ; then His birth, of the Blessed Mary, by an immaculate conception, at Christmas ; then His circumcision ; His manifestation to the wise men ; His baptism and beginning of miracles ; His presentation in the temple ; His fasting and temptation in the wilderness, in Lent ; His agony in the garden ; His betrayal ; His mocking and scourging ; His cross and passion ; His burial ; His resurrection ; His forty days' converse with His disciples after it ; then His Ascension ; and, lastly, the coming of the Holy Ghost in His place to remain with the Church unto the end,—unto the end of the world ; for so long is the Almighty Comforter to remain with us. And thus, in commemorating the Spirit's gracious office during the past week, we were brought, in our series of representations, to the end of all things ; and now what is left but to commemorate what will follow after the end ?—the return of the everlasting reign of God, the infinite peace and blissful perfection of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, differing indeed from what it once was by the fruits of creation and redemption, but not differing in the supreme blessedness, the ineffable mutual love, the abyss of holiness in which the Three Persons of the Eternal Trinity dwell. He then, is the subject of this day's celebration,—the God of love, of holiness, of blessedness ; in whose presence is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore ; who is what He ever was, and has brought us sinners to that which He ever was. He did not bring peace and love into being as part of His creation, but He was Himself peace and love from eternity, and He blesses us by making us partakers of Himself, through the Son, by the Spirit, and He so works in His temporal dispensations that He may bring us to that which is eternal.

And hence, in Scripture, the promises of eternity and security go together ; for where time is not, there vicissitude also is away. "The Eternal God is thy refuge," says Moses, before his death, "and underneath are the everlasting arms : and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee ; and shall say, Destroy them ; Israel then shall dwell in safety alone." And again, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye, in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." And again, "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity. . . . I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of

a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones . . . I create the fruit of the lips ; peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near." And, in like manner, our Lord and Saviour is prophesied of as being "the *Everlasting* Father, the Prince of *peace*. And again, speaking more especially of what He has done for us, "The work of righteousness shall be *peace* ; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and *assurance* for ever."*

As then we have for many weeks commemorated the economy by which righteousness was restored to us, which took place in time, so from this day forth do we bring before our minds the infinite perfections of Almighty God, and our hope hereafter of seeing and enjoying them. Hitherto we have celebrated His great works ; henceforth we magnify Himself. For twenty-five weeks we represent in figure what is to be hereafter. We enter into our rest, by entering in with Him who, having wrought and suffered, has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. For half a year we stand still, as if occupied solely in adoring Him, and, with the Seraphim in the text, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy," continually. All God's providences, all God's dealings with us, all His judgments, mercies, warnings, deliverances, tend to peace and repose as their ultimate issue. All our troubles and pleasures here, all our anxieties, fears, doubts, difficulties, hopes, encouragements, afflictions, losses, attainments, tend this one way. After Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, comes Trinity Sunday, and the weeks that follow ; and in like manner, after our soul's anxious travail ; after the birth of the Spirit ; after trial and temptation ; after sorrow and pain ; after daily dyings to the world ; after daily risings unto holiness ; at length comes that "rest which remaineth unto the people of God." After the fever of life ; after wearinesses and sicknesses ; fightings and despondings ; languor and fretfulness ; struggling and failing, struggling and succeeding ; after all the changes and chances of this troubled, unhealthy state, at length comes death, at length the White Throne of God, at length the Beatific Vision. After restlessness comes rest, peace, joy ;—our eternal portion, if we be worthy ;—the sight of the Blessed Three, the Holy One ; the Three that bear witness in heaven ; in light unapproachable ; in glory without spot or blemish ; in power without "variableness, or shadow of turning." The Father God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God ; the Father Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord ; the Father uncreate he Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate ; the Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and

* Deut. xxxiii. 27, 28. Isai. xxvi. 3, 4 ; lvi. 15. 19 ; ix. 6 ; xxxii. 17.

another of the Holy Ghost ; and such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost ; and yet there are not three Gods, nor three Lords, nor three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated ; but one God, one Lord, one uncreated, and one incomprehensible.

Let us, then, use with thankfulness the subject of this day's Festival, and the Creed of St. Athanasius, as a means of peace, till it is given us, if we attain thereto, to see the face of God in heaven. What the Beatific Vision will then impart, the contemplation of revealed mysteries gives us as in a figure. The doctrine of the Blessed Trinity has been made the subject of especial contention among the professed followers of Christ. It has brought a sword upon earth, but it was intended to bring peace. And it does bring peace to those who humbly receive it in faith. Let us beg of God to bless it to us to its right uses, that it may not be an occasion of strife, but of worship ; not of division, but of unity ; not of jealousy, but of love. Let us devoutly approach Him of whom it speaks, with the confession of our lips and of our hearts. Let us look forward to the time when this world will have passed away and all its delusions ; and when we, when every one born of woman, must either be in heaven or in hell. Let us desire to hide ourselves under the shadow of His wings. Let us beg Him to give us an understanding heart, and that love of Him, which is the instinct of the new creature, and the breath of spiritual life. Let us pray Him to give us the spirit of obedience, of true dutifulness ; an honest spirit, earnestly set to do His will, with no secret ends, no selfish designs of our own, no preferences of the creature to the Creator, but open, clear, conscientious, and loyal. So will He vouchsafe, as time goes on, to take up His abode in us ; the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, will dwell in us, and be in us, and Christ "will love us, and will manifest Himself to us," and The Father will love us, and They will come unto us, and make Their abode with us." And when at length the inevitable hour comes, we shall be able meekly to surrender our souls, our sinful yet redeemed souls, in much weakness and trembling, with much self-reproach and deep confession, yet in firm faith, and in cheerful hope, and in calm love, to God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost ; the Blessed Three, the Holy One ; Three Persons, One God, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier, our Judge.

END OF VOL. II.

NEW WORKS AND NEW EDITIONS
OF
ESTABLISHED EPISCOPAL BOOKS,
PUBLISHED BY
D. APPLETON & CO., NEW-YORK,
AND
GEORGE S. APPLETON, PHILADELPHIA.

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST;

OR, HINTS

Respecting the Principles, Constitution, and Ordinances of the Catholic Church.

BY FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE, M.A.

Chaplain of Guy's Hospital, Professor of English Literature and History, King's College London. In one elegant octavo volume of 500 pages, uniform in style with Newman's Sermons, Palmer on the Church, &c. \$2 50.

The following brief table of contents illustrates the more important topics treated on in this very able work.

PART I. On the Principles of the Quakers, and of the different religious bodies which have arisen since the Reformation, and of the systems to which they have given birth. CHAPTER I.—QUAKERISM. On the positive doctrines of the Quakers, ordinary objections to these Doctrines. The Quaker System—Practical Workings of the Quaker System. CHAPTER II—PURE PROTESTANTISM. The leading Principles of the Reformation—Objections to the Principles of the Reformation Considered—Protestant Systems—The Practical Workings of the Protestant Systems. CHAPTER III—UNITARIANISM—its History and Object Illustrated. CHAPTER IV—On the TENDENCY OF THE RELIGIOUS, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND POLITICAL MOVEMENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN PROTESTANT BODIES SINCE THE MIDDLE OF THE LAST CENTURY. The Religious Movements, Philosophical Movements, Political Movements.

PART II. Of the Catholic Church and the Romish System. CHAPTER I—RECAPITULATION. CHAPTER II—INDICATIONS OF A SPIRITUAL CONSTITUTION. CHAPTER III—The Scriptural View of this Constitution. CHAPTER IV—Signs of a Spiritual Society.—Baptism—The Creeds—Forms of Worship—The Eucharist—The Ministry—The Scriptures. CHAPTER V—Of the Relation of the Church and National Bodies.—Introductory—Objections of the Quakers—The Pure Theocratist—The Separatist—The Patrician—The Modern Statesman—The Modern Interpreter of Prophecy.

PART III. The English Church and the Systems which Divide it. CHAPTER I—Introductory—How far this Subject is Connected with those previously Discussed. Do the Signs of a Universal and Spiritual Constitution exist in England? Does the Universal Church in England exist apart from its Civil Institutions in Union with them? What is the form of Character which belongs especially to Englishmen? To what depravation is it liable? CHAPTER II—The English Systems. The Liberal System—The Evangelical System—The High Church or Catholic System. Reflections on the Systems, and on our position generally.

“Mr. Maurice's work is eminently fitted to engage the attention and meet the wants of all interested in the several movements that are now taking place in the religious community; it takes up the pretensions generally of the several Protestant denominations and of the Romanists, so as to commend itself in the growing interest in the controversy between the latter and their opponents. The political portion of the work contains much that is attractive to a thoughtful man, of any or of no religious persuasion, in reference to the existing and possible future state of our country.”

PAROCHIAL SERMONS,

BY JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D.,

Fellow of the Oriel College and Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin's, Oxford. The six volumes of the London edition complete in two elegant 8vo. volumes of upwards of 600 pages each. \$5 00.

Mr. Newman's Sermons have probably attained a higher character than any others ever published in this country. The following commendatory letter (is one of the many) received by the publishers during their progress through the press.

From the Bishop of North Carolina.

Raleigh, Nov. 28, 1842.

Your letter announcing your intention to republish the Parochial Sermons of the Rev. John Henry Newman, B.D., Oxford, has given me sincere pleasure. In complying with your request for my opinion of them, I do not hesitate to say—after a constant use of them in my closet, and an observation of their effect upon some of my friends, for the last six years—that they are among the very best practical sermons in the English language—that while they are free from those extravagances of opinion usually ascribed to the author of the Ninetieth Tract, they assert, in the strongest manner, the true doctrines of the Reformation in England, and enforce with peculiar solemnity and effect that holiness of life, with the means thereto, so characteristic of the Fathers of that trying age. With high respect and esteem, your friend and servant,

L. S. IVES.

THE HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION

OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. By GILBERT BURNET, D.D., late Lord Bishop of Salisbury. With the Collection of Records, and a copious Index, revised and corrected, with additional Notes and a Preface, by the Rev. E. Nares, D.D. Illustrated with a Frontispiece and twenty-three Portraits on steel. Forming four elegant 8vo. vols. of near 600 pages each. \$8 00.

To the student either of civil or religious history no epoch can be of more importance than that of the Reformation in England. It signalized the overthrow, in one of its strongest holds, of the Roman power, and gave an impulse to the human mind, the full results of which are even now but partly realized. Almost all freedom of inquiry—all toleration in matters of religion, had its birth-hour then; and without a familiar acquaintance with all its principal events, but little progress can be made in understanding the nature and ultimate tendencies of the revolution then effected.

The History of Bishop BURNET is one of the most celebrated and by far the most frequently quoted of any that has been written of this great event. Upon the original publication of the first volume, it was received in Great Britain with the loudest and most extravagant encomiums. The author received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and was requested by them to continue the work. In continuing it he had the assistance of the most learned and eminent divines of his time; and he confesses his indebtedness for important aid to LLOYD, TILLOTSON and STILLINGFLEET, three of the greatest of England's Bishops. "I know," says he, in his Preface to the second volume, "that nothing can more effectually recommend this work, than to say that it passed with their hearty approbation, after they had examined it with that care which their great zeal for the cause concerned in it, and their goodness to the author and freedom with him, obliged them to use."

The present edition of this great work has been edited with laborious care by Dr. Nares, who professes to have corrected important errors into which the author fell, and to have made such improvements in the order of the work as will render it far more useful to the reader or historical student. Preliminary explanations, full and sufficient to the clear understanding of the author, are given, and marginal references are made throughout the book, so as greatly to facilitate and render accurate its consultation. The whole is published in four large octavo volumes of six hundred pages in each—printed upon heavy paper in large and clear type. It contains portraits of twenty-four of the most celebrated characters of the Reformation, and is issued in a very neat style. It will of course find a place in every theologian's library—and will, by no means, we trust, be confined to that comparatively limited sphere.

BURNET ON THE XXXIX ARTICLES.

An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. By GILBERT BURNET, D.D., late Bishop of Salisbury. With an Appendix, containing the Augsburg Confession—Creed of Pope Pius IV., &c. Revised and corrected, with copious Notes and additional References, by the Rev. James R. Page, A.M., of Queen's College, Cambridge. In one handsome 8vo. volume. \$2 00.

"No Churchman, no Theologian, can stand in need of information as to the character or value of Bishop Burnet's Exposition, which long since took its fitting place as one of the acknowledged and admired standards of the Church. It is only needful that we speak of the labours of the editor of the present edition, and these appear to blend a fitting modesty with eminent industry and judgment. Thus, while Mr. Page has carefully verified, and in many instances corrected and enlarged the references to the Fathers, Councils and other authorities, and greatly multiplied the Scripture citations—for the Bishop seems in many cases to have forgotten that his readers would not all be as familiar with the Sacred Text as himself, and might not as readily find a passage even when they knew it existed—he (Mr. P.) has scrupulously left the text untouched, and added whatever illustrative matter he has been able to gather in the form of Notes and an Appendix. The documents collected in the latter are of great and abiding value."

PEARSON ON THE CREED.

An Exposition of the Creed. By JOHN PEARSON, D.D., late Bishop of Chester. With an Appendix, containing the principal Greek and Latin Creeds. Revised and corrected by the Rev. W. S. Dobson, M.A., Peterhouse, Cambridge. In one handsome 8vo. volume. \$2 00.

The following may be stated as the advantages of this edition over all others.

First—Great care has been taken to correct the numerous errors in the references to the texts of Scripture which had crept in by reason of the repeated editions through which this admirable work has passed; and many references, as will be seen on turning to the Index of Texts, have been added.

Secondly—The Quotations in the Notes have been almost universally identified and the references to them adjoined.

Lastly—The principal Symbols or Creeds, of which the particular Articles have been cited by the author, have been annexed; and wherever the original writers have given the Symbols in a scattered and disjointed manner, the detached parts have been brought into a successive and connected point of view. These have been added in chronological order in the form of an Appendix.—*Vide Editor.*

Dwinity, Theology, Religious and Devotional Works.

PALMER'S TREATISE ON THE CHURCH.

A Treatise on the Church of Christ. Designed chiefly for the use of Students in Theology. By the Rev. William Palmer, M.A. of Worcester College, Oxford. Edited with Notes, by the Right Rev. W. R. Whittingham, D.D., Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland. Two vols. 8vo., handsomely printed on fine paper. \$5 00.

"The treatise of Mr. Palmer, is the best exposition and vindication of Church Principles that we have ever read; excelling contemporaneous treatises in depth of learning and solidity of judgment, as much as it excels older treatises on the like subjects, in adaptation to the wants and habits of the age. Of its influence in England, where it has passed through two editions, we have not the means to form an opinion; but we believe that in this country it has already, even before its reprint, done more to restore the sound tone of Catholic principles and feeling than any other one work of the age. The author's learning and powers of combination and arrangement, great as they obviously are, are less remarkable than the sterling good sense, the vigorous and solid judgment, which is every where manifest in the treatise, and confers on it its distinctive excellence. The style of the author is distinguished for dignity and masculine energy, while his tone is everywhere natural; on proper occasions, reverential; and always, so far as we remember, sufficiently conciliatory.

"To our clergy and intelligent laity who desire to see the Church justly discriminated from Romanists on the one hand, and dissenting denominations on the other, we earnestly commend Palmer's Treatise on the Church."—*N. Y. Churchman.*

"This able, elaborate, and learned vindication of the claim of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to be considered the true Catholic Church, and the exposure which is here made of the grounds of difference between it and the Roman Church, and of the baseless pretensions of that church to be the 'one Holy Catholic, and Apostolic Church,' will assuredly commend these volumes to the favour of Churchmen.

"At a moment when Popery, as is well expressed in the American Editor's preface, is spreading among us by 'the aid mainly of imported men, money, and members,' it is well, by a true relation of what Popery really is, to put the nation on guard against its encroachments. This service is done by this treatise, of which it were recommendation enough to say, that its republication has engaged the labours and time of, and is commended to the use of theological students by, certainly not the least learned, pious, and exemplary of our American Bishops. The publishers deserve a full share of commendation for the handsome manner in which they have sent forth these volumes."—*N. Y. American.*

MAGEE ON ATONEMENT AND SACRIFICE.

Discourses and Dissertations on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice, and on the Principal Arguments advanced, and the Mode of Reasoning employed by the Opponents of those Doctrines, as held by the Established Church. By the late most Rev. William M'Gee, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Two vols. royal 8vo. beautifully printed. \$5 00.

"This is one of the ablest critical and polemical works of modern times. Archbishop Magee is truly a *maieus hereticorum*. He is an excellent scholar, an acute reasoner, and is possessed of a most extensive acquaintance with the wide field of argument to which his volumes are devoted—the profound Biblical information on a variety of topics which the Archbishop brings forward, must endear his name to all lovers of Christianity."—*Orme.*

HARE'S PAROCHIAL SERMONS.

Sermons to a Country Congregation. By Augustus William Hare, A.M., late Fellow of New College, and Rector of Alton Barnes. One vol. royal 8vo. \$2 25.

"Any one who can be pleased with delicacy of thought expressed in the most simple language—any one who can feel the charm of finding practical duties elucidated and enforced by apt and varied illustrations—will be delighted with this volume, which presents us with the workings of a pious and highly-gifted mind."—*Quar. Review.*

A MANUAL FOR COMMUNICANTS;

Or the Order for Administering the Holy Communion; conveniently arranged with Meditations and Prayers from Old English Divines, being the Eucharistia of Samuel Wilberforce, M.A., Archdeacon of Surry, (adapted to the American service.) Convenient size for the pocket. \$37½.

"The order of this work is as follows:—First, 'The Exhortation;' comprising the two exhortations which are inserted in the Communion Office; then the 'Ante-Communion;' next, 'The Canon of the Holy Communion;' beginning with the Offertory and ending with the Form of administering the elements; and lastly, the Post Communion. This part of the work is the Communion Office as contained in the Prayer Book, slightly altered in its arrangement, and accompanied with a few short devotional meditations in the margin. After this is the Introduction by Archdeacon Wilberforce, chiefly on the importance of attendance at the Lord's Table, and the causes of the present neglect of the privilege.

We have next a brief notice of the writers from whose works are taken the extracts which form the body of the volume. These are Colei, Cranmer, Jewel, Hooker, Andrews, Sutton, Laud, Hall, Hammond, Taylor, Leighton, Brevint, Patrick, Addison, Ken, Sparrow, Devorager, Hickes, Comber, Ketticwell, Wilson, and Potter; whose names are arranged in chronological order, with a mention in few lines of their lives and characters. The remainder of the work is divided into three parts; of which the first consists of Meditations on the Holy Communion; the second of Prayers before and after Communion; to which are added, Bishop Wilson's Meditations on Select Passages, and Bishop Patrick's Prayer for one who cannot publicly communicate; and the third of select passages explanatory of the Holy Sacrament and the benefits of its worthy reception.

These meditations, prayers and expositions, are given in the very words of the illustrious divines above mentioned, martyrs, confessors and doctors of the Church; and they form altogether such a body of instructive matter as is nowhere else to be found in the same compass. Though collected from various authors, the whole is pervaded by a unity of spirit and purpose; and we most earnestly commend the work as better fitted than any other which we know, to subserve the ends of sound edification and fervent and substantial devotion. The American reprint has been edited by a deacon of great promise in the Church, and is appropriately dedicated to the Bishop of this diocese."—*Churchman.*

CHURCHMAN'S LIBRARY.

The volumes of this Standard Series are printed on the finest paper, elegantly ornamented, and bound in a superior manner, and uniform in size. Bishop Doane says of this collection, "I write to express my thanks to you for reprints of the Oxford Books; first, for such books, and secondly, in such a style. I sincerely hope you may be encouraged to go on, and give them all to us. You will dignify the art of printing, and you will do great service to the best interest of the country." In a letter received from Bishop Whittingham, he says, "I had forgotten to state my *very great satisfaction* at your commencement of a series of Devotional Works, lately republished in Oxford." The Publishers beg to state while in so short a time this Library has increased to so many volumes, they are encouraged to make yet larger additions, and earnestly hope it may receive all the encouragement it deserves.

THE FOLLOWING VOLUMES HAVE ALREADY APPEARED:—

THE EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH.

Or Christian History of England in early British, Saxon and Norman Times. By the Rev. Edward Churton, M.A. With a Preface, by the Right Rev. Bishop Ives. 1 vol. 16mo. elegantly ornamented. \$1 00.

"The following delightful pages place before us some of the choicest examples—both clerical and lay—of the true Christian spirit, in the EARLY ENGLISH CHURCH. In truth, these pages are crowded with weighty lessons. Here our lady will find that these noble foundations of charity in the mother country—the existence of which they have been accustomed to ascribe to the credulity of ignorance, or the fears of superstition, successfully practised upon by the arts of priests, had a higher and holier origin—that they sprang into being under the warm impulses of that divine and expansive benevolence of which the constraining power of Christ's love made his early followers such large partakers at the period while yet Christian men fully recognised their high vocations, as 'stewards of the manifold gifts of God,'—lived under the abiding conviction, that we are not our own, but that, 'bought with the precious blood of Christ,' we are 'bound to glorify him in our bodies and our spirits, which are his.' Here, too, our clergy may learn a lesson of true self-devotion to their Master—may see, strikingly and beautifully illustrated, that love for Christ, and that zeal for his kingdom, which alone can bear us tranquilly and successfully through the labours and trials of the holy ministry—may see the operation of the true missionary spirit—the spirit of endurance and self-sacrifice, which shrinks from no obstacles when the salvation of sinners is to be achieved under the command and the promise of the Almighty God—may see, in short, an impressive and instructive exemplification of that child-like submission to God, that pure and simple trust in him, which, at his bidding, performs duty, and leaves the result to his providence and grace.

"But, to read these pages with profit, we must pray to God for a portion of that spirit which indited them, and which so manifestly control the events which they record—must read them with a spiritual eye; with an eye intent upon discovering—not that which may help to sustain some preconceived notion, but that which, prompted by the spirit of Christ, and accomplished through the power of his saving truth, exhibits to us some great principle of Christian action, and some powerful motive to 'go and do likewise.'"—*Vide Preface.*

LEARN TO DIE.

Disce Mori, Learn to Die: a Religious Discourse, moving every Christian man to enter into a serious Remembrance of his End. By Christopher Sutton, D. D., late Prebend of Westminster. 1 vol. 16mo., elegantly ornamented. \$1 00.

"Of the three works of this excellent author lately reprinted in England, the 'Disce Mori' is, in our judgment, decidedly the best. It was the favourite book of the Bishop of Joly, who, (the touching incident cannot be forgotten,) died with it in his hands. It was this fact, we believe, which first recalled the book from the oblivion into which it had fallen; and our readers may remember, that shortly after its republication in England, we urged an American reprint, on the ground that it was a book which would prove universally acceptable to the Church. Such is still our opinion; we do not believe that a single journal or clergyman in the Church will be found to say a word in its disparagement; but that, on the contrary, all will unite in commending it as one of the very best of our practical works, equally devotional, and almost equally rich with the similar work of Taylor, and free from those features with which Taylor starts such weak minds as have a morbid dread of Romanism. Our columns have been, and now that the book is reprinted, will again be, enriched with extracts which will make the 'Disce Mori' favourably known to our readers."—*Churchman.*

MEDITATIONS ON THE SACRAMENT.

Godly Meditations upon the most Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By Christopher Sutton, D. D., late Prebend of Westminster. 1 vol. royal 16mo. elegantly ornamented. \$1 00.

"We announced in our last number the republication in this country, of Sutton's 'Meditations on the Lord's Supper' and having since read the work, are prepared to recommend it warmly and without qualification to the perusal of our readers. It is purely practical; the doctrine of the Eucharist being touched upon only in so far as was necessary to guard against error. Its standard of piety is very high, and the helps which it affords to a devout participation of the holy sacrament of which it treats, should make it the inseparable companion of every communicant. We know indeed of no work on the subject that can in all respects be compared with it; and for its agency in promoting that advancement in holiness after which every Christian should strive, have no hesitation in classing it with the Treatise on 'Holy Living and Dying' of Bishop Taylor, and the 'Sacra Privata' of Bishop Wilson. The period at which the book was written will account for, and excuse, what in the present age would be regarded as defects of style; but these are fewer than might have been expected, and are soon lost sight of in the contemplation of the many and great excellencies with which it abounds. The publishers have done good service to the country in the publication of this work, which is a beautiful reprint of the Oxford edition, and we are glad to learn that it will be speedily followed by the 'Disce Vivere' and 'Disce Mori' of the same author."—*Banner of the Cross.*

THE PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN:

Or the Devout Penitent; a book of Devotion, containing the whole duty of a Christian in all occasions and necessities, fitted to the main use of a holy life, by R. Sherlocke, D. D., with a life of the Author, by the Right Rev. Bishop Wilson, Author of *Sacra Privata*, &c. One elegant volume, 16mo. 75 cts.]

Of the singular excellency of Dr. Sherlocke's character, the eminent Bishop Wilson observes: Pure and unaffected piety, charity at once comprehensive and discriminating, a daily self-denial and bearing of the Cross, a noble superiority to the world, an ever-burning and ever-active zeal for his Master's glory, an unshaken fidelity to the Church, not only in the season of her prosperity, but also in the dark days of her adversity; an intellect, holding in vigorous grasp the great principles of Catholic Truth; a moral energy realizing these principles deep in the inner man, and exhibiting them in outward conduct "beautiful exceedingly." Such are some of the prominent features of his character as drawn in life-like form by the pen of his episcopal biographer.

The Practical Christian now submitted to the reader, from the seventh English edition, is by far the most important of all Dr. Sherlocke's works. It was a work of gradual growth and progressive enlargement, and we have his biographer's testimony to the fact, that he made it the model of his own devotions—"strictly observing himself what he so earnestly recommended to others." The following devotions, living impressions as it were of the living mould—bring the tutor of Bishop Wilson again before us, and it may be devoutly hoped that as their author, when living, succeeded in forming one of the noblest characters in the Church's Modern Calendar, so now, though absent from us in body, this his work, instinct as it everywhere is with his own saintly spirit, may tend to produce many more such characters to the glory of God and the edification of his Holy Church.

THE TRUE CHURCHMAN'S COMPANION IN THE CLOSET: OR, A COMPLETE MANUAL OF PRIVATE DEVOTIONS:

Selected from the writings of Archbishop Laud, Bishop Andrews, Bishop Ken, Dr. Hickes, Mr. Kettlewell, Mr. Spinckes, and other eminent OLD ENGLISH DIVINES.

With a Preface by Rev. Mr. Spinckes. Edited by Francis E. Paget, M. A. One elegant volume 16mo., \$1 00.

The pious reader will require no more recommendation of this volume than that which he will find in its title-page. A Manual of Prayers compiled from the devotional writings of Laud and Andrews, Ken and Hickes, Kettlewell and Spinckes, cannot be otherwise than acceptable to all who love those principles which they unanimously taught, and for the maintaining of which, (with the exception of the good Bishop of Winton, whose lot was cast in tranquil times,) they suffered according to the measure which God required of each; to all who would fain follow them in the paths of self-denial, spiritual-mindedness, meekness and obedience. And that this book has been to past generations, what it is hoped it may likewise be to our own, is evident from the fact that it is one of the few of the devotional works of the seventeenth century, which continued to be in constant demand during the eighteenth. Its value was appreciated, and it continued to be reprinted from time to time to the middle of the last century; and it is presented to the public once more, with the anxious desire that as it found favor to the last, while Church principles were declining, so it may prove acceptable to the many, who (blessed be God,) seem now to be zealously and faithfully seeking their way back to the "old paths" from which we have wandered.—EDITOR'S PREFACE.

OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST:

Four books by Thomas A. Kempis. One elegantly printed volume, 16mo., \$1 00.

This is the first complete American edition of this celebrated book, which may satisfactorily be compared with the *Sacra Privata* of Bishop Wilson; to whom also the character of its eminent author may in many respects be compared.

*. These volumes will be followed by others of approved merit.

OGILBY ON LAY-BAPTISM:

An outline on the Argument against the validity of Lay-Baptism. By the Rev. John D. Ogilby, A. M., Professor of Ecclesiastical History. One vol. 12mo., 75 cts.

"We have been favored with a copy of the above work, and lose no time in announcing its publication. From a cursory inspection of it, we take it to be a thorough, fearless, and very able discussion of the subject which it proposes, aiming less to excite inquiry, than to satisfy by learned and ingenious argument, inquiries already excited."—CHURCHMAN.

THE PRIMITIVE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION:

Or, an Historical Inquiry into the Ideality and Causation of Scriptural Election, as received and maintained in the primitive Church of Christ. By George Stanley Faber, B. D., author of "Difficulties of Romanism," "Difficulties of Infidelity," &c. Complete in one volume, octavo. \$1 75.

"Mr. Faber verifies his opinion by demonstration. We cannot pay a higher respect to his work than by recommending it to all."—CHURCH OF ENGLAND QUARTERLY REVIEW.

Divinity, Theology, Religious and Devotional Works.

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING PRAYER,

And the frequenting Daily Public Prayers. By Symon Patrick, D.D., sometime Lord Bishop of Ely. Edited by Francis E. Paget, M.A., Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Oxford. 1 vol. royal 16mo. elegantly ornamented. \$0 75.

"This work treats of the nature and necessity of prayer, of the sense of all mankind about this matter, especially of our blessed Saviour, of the honour done us by God in admitting us into his presence, and of the great benefits we receive by it. It shows that public prayer is the most necessary of all, that God is most honoured by it, that it is most advantageous to us, and most suitable to the nature of man, that the nature of a Church requires it, that our Saviour has taught the doctrine, which is confirmed by the practice of the Apostles and first Christians; and it treats of daily public assemblies and hours of prayer.

"To all who have been benefitted and instructed by Bishop Patrick's writings (that is, to all who have with due care read, and meditated, and prayed over any one of them) it is unnecessary to say a word in commendation of the work before us. To others it may suffice to say, that the sooner they make themselves master of this, and the other admirable works of his lately reprinted, the better will it be for the soundness of their views in theology, and the firmness and steadiness of their growth in piety and Christian virtue."—*Charleston Gospel Messenger.*

THE GOLDEN GROVE.

A choice Manual, containing what is to be believed, practised, and desired, or prayed for; the prayers being fitted for the several days of the week. To which is added, a Guide for the Penitent, or a Model drawn up for the help of devout souls wounded with sin. Also Festival Hymns, &c. By the Right Rev. Bishop Jeremy Taylor. 1 vol. 16mo. \$0 50.

"The name of Jeremy Taylor will always be a sufficient passport to any work on whose title page it appears. Of no writer of his period, or indeed of any other period, could it be more truly said, that he has given 'thoughts that breathe in words that burn.' The present little work may perhaps be regarded as among the choicest of his productions. While it is designed to be a *guide* to devotion, it breathes much of the *spirit* of devotion, and abounds in lessons of deep practical wisdom. Its author was an Episcopalian and Episcopals may well be proud of him; but his character and writings can no more be the property of one denomination than the air or the light, or any other of God's universal blessings to the world."—*Albany Advertiser.*

THOUGHTS IN PAST YEARS.

A beautiful collection of Poetry, chiefly Devotional. By the author of "The Cathedral." 1 vol. royal 16mo., elegantly printed. \$1 25.

"This is a new Trans-atlantic poetical work, and although we have not much confidence in our own judgment of poetry, we do not hesitate to venture the opinion that this book is by no means to be ranked with the ephemeral poetical effusions of the day. It is made up of miscellaneous poems, all of them of a moral tendency, and many of them breathing a spirit of deep devotion and earnest piety."—*Albany Journal.*

THE CHRISTMAS BELLS:

A Tale of Holy Tide, and other Poems. By the author of "Constance," "Virginia," &c. 1 vol. royal 16mo., elegantly ornamented. \$0 75.

"Many of the smaller pieces in this volume have appeared from time to time in various journals and magazines, and have been received with unqualified favour. The leading poem was written for the most part during the season whose enjoyments and happy influences it is designed to commemorate. The plan of it was suggested by the perusal of Washington Irving's delightful *Essays on the Christmas Season, in the Sketch Book.*"—*Preface.*

SELECT LIST

OF

VALUABLE WORKS IN ENGLISH THEOLOGY,

INCLUDING

MODERN EDITIONS OF THE STANDARD DIVINES,

Of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries.

IMPORTED AND FOR SALE

By D. APPLETON & CO., NEW-YORK,

AND

GEORGE S. APPLETON, PHILADELPHIA.

ANDREWS, Bishop. Ninety-six Sermons
by, 5 vols. 8vo. \$12 50.

In Library of Anglo Catholic Theology.

— Private Devotions. 12mo. \$1 50

— Nineteen Sermons concerning Prayer.
8vo. \$1 50

— Seventeen Sermons, edited by Dau-
beny. 8vo. \$1 50.

"Bishop Andrews has always been ranked among the first scholars of his age, and is well known for his attainments in theology and other branches of learning. A theological student will do well to make himself acquainted with his writings. His sermons contain a rich mine of wisdom and erudition. There is, frequently, a force and vividness in his language, a picturesqueness in his way of exhibiting the subject, a point in his expression, and a harmony in his periods, that we shall vainly seek in the more sober and popular divines of the succeeding school."

AQUINAS, S. Thomas. Commentary on the
four Gospels, collected out of the works of the Fa-
thers. Edited by the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., J. Keble,
M.A., J. H. Newman, B.D. Vol. 1, St. Matthew, Part
1, \$2 75. Vol. 2, St. Mark, \$2 50.

"The editors refer to the Preface for some account of the nature and characteristic excellences of the work, which will be found as useful in the private study of the Gospels, as it is well adapted for family reading, and full of thought for those who are engaged in religious instruction."

ARNOLD, Thomas, D.D. Sermons on Chris-
tian Life; its Course, its Hindrances, and its Helps.
8vo. \$3 75.

AUGUSTINI, St. Aurelii. Opera Omnia.
Editio Parisina, altera, emendata et aucta. 22 vols.
8vo. complete. \$60 00.

"Augustine, the celebrated bishop of Hippo in Africa, in the fourth century, wrote several treatises on the Scriptures, and particularly on the Psalms, and he holds a high rank in Ecclesiastical History. His piety, indefatigable application, sublime genius, unwearied pursuit of truth, and the acuteness of his wit are universally allowed."

**BAPTISTRY, The; or Way of Eternal
Life.** By the author of the Cathedral. Illustrated. 8vo.
\$4 25.

BARROW, Isaac, D.D. The Theological
Works of. 8 vols. 8vo. \$24 00.

— Do. do. small type, 3 vols. \$7 50.

"Barrow may be considered the chief of the latitudinarian divines. Bishop Heber speaking of Hooker, Taylor and Barrow, thus distinguishes them:—"Of such a triumvirate who shall settle the pre-eminence? the first awes most, the second convinces most, the third delights and persuades most. To Barrow the praise must be assigned of the clearest and clearest views, and of a taste the most controlled and chastened."

BEDE, Venerable. The Ecclesiastical His-
tory of the English Nation, from the Arrival of Julius
Cæsar till AD. 731. Revised and corrected from the
Translation of Mr. Stevens by the Rev. J. H. Giles,
LL.D. 8vo. \$2 50.

BELARMINE'S Notes on the Church, ex-
amined and refuted by various eminent Divines.
8vo. \$1 75.

BEVERIDGE, Bishop. Ecclesia Anglicana,
Ecclesia Catholica; or the Doctrine of the Church of
England consonant to Scripture, Reason and Fathers:
in a Discourse upon the Thirty-Nine Articles. 2 vols.
8vo. \$5 00.

— Thesaurus Theologicus; or a Com-
plete System of Divinity: summed up in brief Notes
upon select places of the Old and New Testament.
2 vols. 8vo. \$8 00.

BERKELEY, George, D.D., the Works of,
to which are added an account of his Life, &c. 8vo.
\$2 50.

"The style of Berkeley is very clear, and his bold method of think-
ing and absence of all adhesion to great authorities, make his works
valuable to the student."

BILSON, Bishop. The Perpetual Gov-
ernment of Christ's Church,—a new edition. 8vo. \$3 50.

BINGHAM, Joseph, Works; containing the
Origines Ecclesiasticæ, or Antiquities of the Christian
Church; a Scholastical History of Lay Baptism; the
French Church's Apology for the Church of England;
a Discourse concerning the mercy of God to penitent
sinners, a new edition, containing the quotations at
length in the original languages. 9 vols. 8vo. \$30 00.

"An invaluable treasure of Christian Antiquities."—*Orme*.
"The English clergyman (Joseph Bingham) remarkable for his pro-
found learning and unprejudiced inquiry, was the first that published
a complete Archeology, and one worthy of the name."—*Vide Augusti*.

BLAYNEY, Rev. Benjamin. Jeremiah and
Lamentations, a new translation, with Notes, Critical,
Philological, and Explanatory. 8vo. \$2 25.

BLOOMFIELD, S. T., D.D. A Critical
Digest and Synoptical Arrangement of the most im-
portant Annotations on the New Testament, exegeti-
cal, philological, and doctrinal. 8 vols. 8vo. \$25 00.

"One of the most important works in sacred literature which has
been offered to the attention of Bible students for many years."
Horne.

BRADLEY, Rev. Charles. A series of
Practical Sermons. 2 vols. 8vo. \$4 75.

"The Sermons of Bradley are much admired."

BRAMHALL, Archbishop. The Works of, with a Life of the author, and a collection of his Letters. Vols. 1 and 2, (to be completed in 5 vols.) \$6 00.

In Library of Anglo Catholic Theology.

BRETT, Rev. Thomas. A collection of the principal Liturgies used in the Christian Church in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; particularly the Advent, viz: The Clementine, as it stands in the Book called the Apostolical Constitutions, The Liturgies of St. James, St. Mark, St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, &c. 8vo. \$3 50.

BROGDEN, Rev. James. Illustrations of the Liturgy and Ritual of the Church of England; being Sermons and Discourses selected from the works of eminent Divines of the seventeenth century. 3 vols. 8vo. \$8 00.

BULL, Bishop, Works, collected and revised by the Rev. Edward Burton, with Life, by Robert Nelson. 8 vols. 8vo. \$22 00.

— **A Vindication of the Church of England** from the Errors and Corruptions of the Church of Rome. 12mo. \$1 00.

— **Some Important Points of Primitive Christianity** maintained and defended in several Sermons and other Discourses. 8vo. \$3 00.

— **Harmonia Apostolica, or the Mutual Agreement** of St. Paul and St. James, or Justification. Part 1, 8vo. (To be completed in 3 vols.) \$1 75.

In Library of Anglo Catholic Theology.

— "Bishop Bull was certainly one of the most eminent divines that ever adorned the Church of England. Bossuet, speaking of Bull, says, 'If you have any doubt of the eternal generation of the Son, I send you to Bull, that learned English Protestant, in the treatise where he hath so well defended the Fathers who lived before the Council of Nice. You must either renounce the faith of the Holy Trinity, which God forbid, or pre-suppose with me that this author is right.'"

BURTON, Edward, D.D. The Theological Works of, 5 vols. 8vo. \$16 00.

— **Lectures on the Ecclesiastical History of the Three First Centuries.** 2 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.

"His works are held in the highest estimation."

BUTLER, Rev. Alban. The Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and other principal Saints. Portraits. 2 vols. imperial 8vo. \$10 00.

"The erudition, the beauty of style, the true spirit of religion, and the mild and conciliating language, which pervade this work, edified all its readers, disposed them to be pleased with a religion in which they saw so much virtue, allayed their prejudices against its professors, and led them to consider the general body with good will."—C. Butler.

BUTLER, Joseph, LL.D. The whole works of. 12mo. \$1 50.

— with Life, by Bishop Halifax. 8vo. \$2 50.

CALVIN, Jno. Christian Theology, selected and systematically arranged, with a Life of the author, by Samuel Dunn. 12mo. \$1 25.

— **Institutes of the Christian Religion,** translated by Jno. Allen. 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

— **Commentary on the Psalms of David.** 3 vols. 8vo. \$7 00.

"Calvin's Commentaries," says the learned Matthew Poole, "abound in solid discussions of theological subjects, and in practical improvements of them."

CARDWELL, Edward, D.D. A History of Conferences and other proceedings connected with the revision of the Book of Common Prayer, from 1558 to 1690. 8vo. \$2 75.

— **The two Books of Common Prayer,** set forth by authority of Parliament in the Reign of Edward the VI., compared with each other. 8vo. \$2 75.

"These two volumes jointly are intended to contain a complete documentary history of the English liturgy from the period of the Reformation down to the present time."

CARDWELL, Edward, D.D. Document Annals of the Reformed Church of England; be' collection of Injunctions, Declarations, Orders, A of Inquiry, &c., from the year 1546, to the year With Notes, Historical and Explanatory. 2 vols. \$

— **Synodalia: a Collection of Articles** of Religion, Canons and Proceedings in Convocations in the Province of Canterbury, from the year 1574 to 1717, with Notes, Historical and Explanatory. 2 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.

CARY, Rev. Henry. Testimonies of the Fathers of the first four Centuries to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, as set forth in the XXXIX. Articles. 8vo. \$3 00.

CATHEDRAL, (The.) Or the Catholic and Apostolical Church in England. Third edition, elegantly illustrated. 12mo. \$2 75.

CAVE, William, D.D. Lives of the most eminent Fathers of the Church that flourished in the first four Centuries; with an Historical Account of the state of Paganism under the first Christian Emperors. A new edition, carefully revised by the Rev. Henry Cary. 3 vols. 8vo. \$6 75.

— **Lives of the Apostles, and the Two Evangelists, St. Mark and St. Luke,** with an Introductory Discourse concerning the Patriarchal, Mosaiacal, and Evangelical Dispensations. A new edition, carefully revised by the Rev. Henry Cary. 8vo. \$2 25.

— **Primitive Christianity; or the Religion of the Ancient Christians in the First Ages of the Gospel.** To which is added a Dissertation concerning the Government of the Ancient Church, by Bishops, Metropolitans, and Patriarchs. A new edition, revised by the Rev. Henry Cary. 8vo. \$2 25.

"They are justly esteemed the best works upon those subjects."

CHRYSOSTOMI, St. Joannis. Opera omnia quæ extant, opera et studio D. Bernardi de Mont-faucon. Editio Parisina, altera, emendata et aucta. 22 vols. 8vo. complete. \$80 00.

"Chrysostom's manner of expounding is this; he first takes a verse of Scripture, which he explains; and then investigates and elucidates the meaning of particular words, pointing out the scope of the author, whose style and genius he examines, and rendering all Hebraisms by equivalent intelligible Greek expressions. He throughout adheres to the literal sense, which he maintained to be the true one."

CHILLINGWORTH, W. The works of, containing his Book, entitled "The Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation," together with his Sermons, Letters, Discourses, Controversies, &c., with Life by Birch. 8vo. \$2 75.

"Archbishop Tillotson styles Chillingworth 'incomparable,' and the glory of his age and nation." Hobbes of Malmesbury used to say that Chillingworth was so richly endowed with reason, that if the Great Turk, or the Devil were ever to be converted, he was the man that was able to do it."

CLERGYMAN'S Instructor, or a Collection of Tracts on the Ministerial Duties. 8vo. \$2 75.

"This volume contains the following valuable tracts, Herbert's Priest, to the Temple or Country parson, Jeremy Taylor's Advice to the Clergy, Burnet on the Pastoral Care, Bishop Sprat's Discourse to the Clergy, Bull's Companion for Candidates of Holy Orders, Bishop Gibson's Directions to the Clergy of London, Archbishop Horsly Instructions to the Clergy, Bishop Wilson's Parochialia."

COLLIER, Jeremiah, M.A. An Ecclesiastical History of Great Britain, chiefly of England, from the planting of Christianity to the end of the reign of Charles the Second, with a brief account of the affairs of religion in Ireland, collected from the best ancient historians, councils and records. A new edition with a Life of the author, the Controversial Tracts connected with the history, Notes, and an enlarged Index; by Francis Barham, Esq. 9 vols. 8vo. \$25 00.

"This celebrated and important work contains much not to be found in Mosheim and other church histories; also many curious particulars relative to the theological publications of the sixteenth century."

COLLYER, David. The Sacred Interpreter; or a Practical Introduction towards a Biblical reading and a thorough understanding of the Holy Bible. 8vo. \$3 00.

"An excellent popular preparation for the study of the Holy Scriptures."—Bishop Alaric.

NMER, Thomas, D.D. The Remains of; selected and arranged by the Rev. Henry Jenkins 4 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.

COMBER, Thomas, D.D. (late Dean of Durham), complete collected Works of. 7 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.
"The writings of Dean Comber (the practical expounder of the Liturgy) are held in the highest estimation."

COSIN, Bishop. A collection of Private Devotions in the Practice of the Ancient Church, called the Hours of Prayer, as they were much after this manner published by authority of Queen Elizabeth, 1560, taken out of the Holy Scriptures, the Ancient Fathers and the Divine Service of our own church. Tenth edition. 24mo. \$1 50.

— The History of Popish Transubstantiation; a new edition, with the authorities at full length. Edited by the Rev. J. S. Brewer, A. M. Post 8vo. \$1 75.

DAVIDSON, Rev. John. Remains and Occasional publications. 8vo. \$3 50.

— Discourses on Prophecy, in which are considered its Structure, Use, and Inspiration. 8vo. \$2 75.

DONNE, John, D.D. Devotions, with two Sermons: 1. On the Decease of Lady Danvers, mother of George Herbert. 2. Death's Duel. His own Funeral Sermon, with his Life. By Izaak Walton. 12mo. \$1 75.

— Complete Works of, With a Memoir of his Life. 6 vols. 8vo. \$21 00.
The writings of this eminent divine are worthy of a place in every library.

DOYLEY & MANT'S Bible. A beautiful new edition. Maps, plates, &c. 3 vols. large 8vo. \$14 00.

EUSEBII Pamphili Historiæ Ecclesiasticæ libridæcur. Ad codices Manuscriptos recensuit Edwardus Burton. S. F. P. 2 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.

FABER, F. W. Twelve Tracts on the Church and her Offices. 12mo. \$1 50.

— George Stanley the Apostolicity of Trinitarianism; or the Testimony of History to the Primitive Antiquity, and to the Apostolical Inculcation of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity. 2 vols. 8vo. \$4 00.

— Sermons on Various Subjects. 2 vols. 8vo. \$4 00.

FLEURY, M. L'Abbe. The Ecclesiastical History of. From the Second Ecumenical Council to the end of the Fourth Century. Translated, with Notes, and an Essay on the Miracles of the period, by the Rev. J. H. Newman, B.D. Fellow of Oriel College. 8vo. \$3 50.
Another volume is in the press.

FULLER, Thomas, D.D. The Church History of Britain, from the Birth of Jesus Christ until the year 1648. New edition, corrected. 3 vols. 8vo. \$7 50.

— The History of the University of Cambridge, and of Waltham Abbey; with the Appeal of Injured Innocence. New edition, with Notes by James Nicholls. 8vo. \$3 50.

— The Holy and Profane State. New edition by James Nicholls; illustrated with twenty Portraits. 8vo. \$2 75.

— The History of the Worthies of England. A new edition, with Explanatory Notes, &c. &c. 3 vols. 8vo. \$7 50.

GRAVES, Richard D. D. Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch, designed to show the Divine origin of the Jewish Religion, chiefly from internal evidence. 5th edition. 8vo. \$3 50.
"This volume of Dr. Graves is truly invaluable, and we cannot but strongly advise every student in divinity to get it up (as it is called) in preparing for his ordination."—*British Critic*.

— The whole Works of, now first collected, with a Memoir of his Life and Writings, by his son, R. H. Graves, D.D. 4 vols. 8vo. \$13 00.

Vol. 1. Memoir—Essay on the Apostles and Evangelists.
"2. Lectures on the four last books of the Pentateuch."
"3. First Preelection as Professor of Divinity—Select Scriptural Proofs of the Trinity—Absolute Predestination compared with the Scripture statement of the Justice of God."
"4. Sermons on various occasions."

GREENHILL, Rev. Wm. An Exposition of the Prophet Ezekiel, with useful observations thereupon. Revised and corrected by the Rev. James Sherman. Reprinted from the edition of 1645. Imperial 8vo. \$6 00.

As a practical expositor of Ezekiel, whose prophecy contains many things "hard to be understood," Greenhill will ever rank deservedly high.

HALE'S, Rev. William, New Analysis of Chronology, in which an attempt is made to explain the History and Antiquities of the Primitive Nations of the World, and the Prophecies relating to them. 4 vols. 8vo. \$17 00.

This ought to be in the library of every biblical student. It is, perhaps, the most valuable chronological work that has ever been published.

HALL, Bishop, The Works of; with some account of his Life and Sufferings, written by himself. A new edition, revised and corrected. 12 vols. 8vo. \$40 00.

This is by far the best edition of the works of the 'Christian Seneca.' Bishop Hall's sound in his soundness of fancy and eloquent bursts of feeling. In controversy they are calm, clear and persuasive; in didactics they manifest a piety, humble, fervid, sincere; a theory of Christian morals unforbidding and practical; and views of a future existence animating, elevating, and sublime. Few writers more likely to be useful to students. Let them thoroughly read and digest such a writer, and they will be furnished for most of the calls upon them.

HOLDEN, Rev. George. The Authority of Tradition in matters of Religion. 12mo. \$1 25.

HOLE, Rev. Mat., D.D. Practical Discourses on the Liturgy of the Church of England. Edited with a Memoir of the Author, by the Rev. J. Allen Giles. 4 vols. 8vo. 13 00.

HOOKE, Richard, The Works of; containing Eight Books of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity and several other Treatises. With a Life of the Author, by Isaac Walton. 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

— Edited by the Rev. John Keble. 3 vols. 8vo. \$10 00.

Hooker is universally distinguished for long drawn melody and melliflence of language, and his works must find a place in every well chosen clerical library.

HOPKINS, Bishop, The collected Works of, revised, with a Life of the Author. A new edition. 1 vol. imp. 8vo. \$5 00.

"He was one of the last of that sound race of divines to which the Reformation gave birth, and who in uninterrupted succession had maintained in the episcopal chair the genuine doctrine of the Scriptures and of the church. His writings are eminent for the combinations of clear statements of doctrinal and practical truth, with an eloquent application of it to the conscience and the heart."

HORNE, Bishop, The complete Works of. 4 vols. 8vo. \$13 00.

The name of the amiable and excellent prelate must ever be dear to true religion. He was a Hutchinsonian, and wrote several tracts relating to that system.

HORSLEY, Bishop. Sermons. 8vo. \$2 50.

— Theological Works of. 8 vols. 8vo. \$24 00.

Horsley's powers of mind were of a high order, and his sermons, and his other works, will render assistance to the student chiefly in the way of criticism. He had the integrity and candour to speak decidedly against the ignorance of many who opposed what they called Calvinistic views. His works in general throw much light on prophecy.

HURD, Bishop. The Works of. 8 vols. 8vo. \$12 00.

- Vol. 1. Critical Works.
2. Critical Dissertations.
3—4. Moral and Political Dialogues.
5—8. Theological Works.

"In the progress of little more than thirty years, what has not literature, and what the Church of England lost in Warburton, Lowth, Horsley, and Hurd."

JONES, Rev. Wm., of Nayland, The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of, with an account of his Life and Writings, by Wm. Stevens, Esq. 6 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.

"Jones of Nayland, was a man of quick penetration, of extensive learning, and the soundest piety; and he had beyond any other man I ever knew, the talent of writing upon the deepest subjects to the plainest understandings."—*Bishop Horsley.*

JONES, Rev. Jos. Plain and Practical Sermons on the 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of St. John's Gospel. 8vo. \$3 00.

— **A Chronological and Analytical View of the Holy Bible, intended to render the Study of the Scriptures more easy, pleasant and advantageous. 8vo. \$3 00.**

JORTIN, John, D.D. Sermons on different Subjects. 4 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

KEELING, Rev. Wm. Liturgiæ Britannica; or the several editions of the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, from its compilation in the last revision, together with the Liturgy set forth for the use of the Church of Scotland, arranged to show their respective variations. 8vo. \$6 00.

KENNEY, Arthur Henry, D.D. A Comment Explanatory and Practical, on the Epistles and Gospels, for the Sundays of the year and on those for Holidays, immediately relating to our blessed Saviour. 2 vols. 12mo. \$5 00.

"This work is adapted to family reading, from the celebrated publication of Dean Stanhope."

LEIGHTON, Archbishop, Expositions of the Creed, The Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, &c., &c., with an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. J. Pye Smith, D.D. 12mo. \$1 00.

— **The whole Works of, with a Life, by the Rev. John N. Pearson. 2 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.**

— **With Life, by James Aikman. 8vo. \$2 50.**

"He is one of the very first divines of the British Church, whose writings breathe throughout the spirit of devotion; a noble strain of deep piety; a most humble, heavenly and loving spirit; an elegant mind, and a scriptural standard of evangelical doctrine."—*British Critic.*

LESLIE, Rev. Charles, Works of. 7 vols. 8vo. \$18 00.

"His volumes may be considered as a library in themselves to any young student of the Church of England; and no such person, who takes a fancy to what he there finds, can ever fall into Socinianism, Fanaticism, Popery, or any of those more modern corruptions which infect the Church. Every treatise comprehended in the collection is incomparable in its way."—*British Critic.*

LIBRARY of the Fathers. Translated by Members of the English Church. Edited by the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., Regius Professor of Hebrew, Canon, of Christ Church, late Fellow of Oriel College; the Rev. John Keble, M.A., Professor of Poetry, late Fellow of Oriel College; the Rev. J. H. Newman, B.D., Fellow of Oriel College.

Volumes published:

I. The Confessions of St. Augustine. An old translation revised. By E. B. Pusey, D.D. \$2 50.

II. The Catechetical Lectures of S. Cyril of Jerusalem. Translated by R. W. Church, B.A. \$2 50.

III. S. Cyprian's Treatises. \$2 50.

IV. and V. Chrysostom S. John, The Homilies of, on the 1st Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthian Translated, with Notes and Indices. 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

VI. ——— Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and Homilies on the Epistle to the Ephesians. \$2 75.

VII. St. Chrysostom's Homilies on Roman \$3 50.

VIII. St. Athanasius' Treatises in Controversy with the Arians. \$2 50.

IX. S. Chrysostom's Homilies on the Statutes to the People of Antioch. \$3 25.

X. Tertullian, translated by Rev. C. Dodgson, M.A. Vol. I. \$3 50.

XI. St. Chrysostom's Homilies on St. Matthew. Part I. \$2 75.

LOWTH, Bishop. The Popular Works of. 3 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

Containing literal translation of Isaiah, Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, Sermons and Remains.

MANT, Bishop. Primitive Christianity Exemplified and illustrated, by the acts of Primitive Christians. 8vo. \$3 75.

MANTON, Thomas, D.D. One hundred and ninety Sermons on the hundred and nineteenth Psalm; with a complete Alphabetical table directing to the matters contained therein. Third edition, with Life of the author, by Wm. Harris, D.D. 3 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.

"One of the richest storehouses of practical Divinity in the English language, and its usefulness is greatly enhanced by a copious index.

MASSILLON, Bishop. Sermons; to which is prefixed a Life of the author. 8vo. \$2 50.

MILMAN, Rev. H. H. The History of Christianity, from the birth of Christ to the extinction of Paganism in the Roman Empire. 3 vols. 8vo. \$9 00.

"Evincing great research, and exhibiting profound knowledge of the subject, it breathes a spirit of peace and tolerance and conciliation which are or ought to be the characteristics of all ministers of the gospel.

NEANDER, Augustus, D.D. The History of the Christian Religion and Church, during the three first centuries. Translated from the German, by Henry Rose, B.D. 2 vols. 8vo. \$6 00.

NEWMAN, John Henry. Parochial Sermons. 6 vols. 8vo. \$18 00.

— **Lectures on Justification. 8vo. \$3 00.**

— **Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church, viewed relatively to Romanism and Popular Protestantism. 8vo. \$3 00.**

— **The Church of the Fathers. 12mo. \$2 00.**

NICHOLSON, Bishop. An Exposition of the Catechism of the Church of England. 8vo. \$1 75.

OWEN, John, D.D. An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with Preliminary Exercitation. 4 vols. 8vo.

"The most valuable exposition of this epistle ever published. The preliminary exercitations supply an immense mass of learned information on all the important points of the Jewish controversy, the exposition combines criticism and practical instruction."—*Orme.*

OXFORD EDITIONS.

UNIFORMLY PRINTED IN ROYAL 18MO. VOLUMES.

BULL [Bp.] Nelson's Life of, with a Preface by J. H. Newman, B.D. 18mo.	\$1 25.
— Vindication of the Church of England.	1 00.
HAMMOND'S Parænesis, edited by the Rev. H. E. Manning, M. A.	1 00.
JONES, (of Nayland) Letters from a Tutor to his Pupils, edited by the Rev. E. Coleridge, M.A. Eaton College.	1 00.
KEBLE'S Selections from HOOKER.	1 25.
LAUD'S [Abp.] Devotions, edited by F. W. Faber, M. A.	1 25.
— Autobiography.	1 50.
— on the Liturgy.	1 25.
PATRICK [Bp.] on Prayer, edited by F. E. Paget, M.A.	1 00.
— on Repentance and Fasting.	1 00.
— Advice to a Friend.	1 00.
PRIDEAUX'S Doctrine of Prayer.	1 25.
SARAVIA on the Priesthood.	1 00.
SCANDRET on Sacrifice.	1 00.
SHERLOCK'S Practical Christian.	1 00.
SPARROW'S [Bp.] Rationale on the Book of Common Prayer, with Andrews' Consecration Service.	1 50.
SPINCKES'S Devotions, edited by the Rev. F. E. Paget.	1 25.
SUTTON'S Disce Mori.	1 25.
— Disce Vivere.	1 25.
— Meditations on the Sacrament.	1 25.
TAYLOR'S [Bp.] Golden Grove. A new edition, with a Notice on the Guide for the Penitent, by E. B. Pusey, D.D.	0 75.
VINCENTIUS LIRINENSIS against Heresy.	1 00.
WILSON'S [Bp.] Sacra Privata.	1 25.
— Parochialia.	1 00.

PALMER, Rev. William. Origines Liturgicæ, or Antiquities of the English Ritual, and a Dissertation on Primitive Liturgies. 2 vols. 8vo. 4 75.

— A Treatise on the Church of Christ: designed chiefly for the use of Students in Theology. Second edition. 2 vols. 8vo. \$8 00.

“The leading work on the subject, of which it is scarcely possible to speak in terms of adequate commendation.”—*British Critic*.

— Letters to Dr. Wiseman on the Errors of Romanism. 8vo. \$3 25.

PATRICK, Lowth, Arnold, Whithy and Lowman's Critical Commentary and Paraphrase on the Old and New Testament and the Apocrypha; a new edition, with the text printed at large. 4 vols. imperial 8vo. \$25 00.

“In the previous editions of this invaluable Commentary, the Annotations were printed without the Text, thus rendering it a mere book of reference for the study; in this edition the Text is placed at the head of each page, thus adapting it for general use, both in the family and in the closet.”

PLAIN Sermons, by Contributors to the Tracts for the Times. 4 vols. \$8 00

POOL, Matthew. Annotations upon the Holy Bible; wherein the sacred text is inserted, and various readings annexed, together with the parallel

Scriptures; the more difficult terms are explained, seeming contradictions reconciled, doubts resolved, and the whole text opened. 3 vols. imp. 8vo. \$18 00.

“This work is recommended by Gilpin, Dra. E. Williams, E. Clarke, Doddridge, and the learned in general. Cecil says, ‘If we must have commentators, as we certainly must, Pool is incomparable, and I had almost said, abundant of himself.’”

POTTER, Archbishop. A discourse on Church Government: wherein the Rights of the Church, and the supremacy of Christian Princes, are vindicated and adjusted. 8vo. \$2 25.

PRUEN, Rev. Thomas. An Illustration of the Liturgy of the Church of England as to its Daily Service, including a Particular Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' and Athanasian Creeds. 2 vols. large 8vo. \$5 00.

REYNOLDS, Bishop. The whole Works of, with a Memoir of his Life, by Alexander Chalmers. 6 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.

“The works of Bishop Reynolds form a most valuable accession to our stores of sound and masculine theology.”

RIDDLE, Rev. J. E. A Manual of Christian Antiquities; or an account of the Constitution, Ministers, Worship, Discipline and Customs of the Ancient Church, particularly during the third, fourth and fifth Centuries; to which is prefixed an Analysis of the Writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. Large 8vo. \$5 50.

RIDDLE, Rev. J. E. Ecclesiastical Chronology; or Annals of the Church, from the earliest times to the present, arranged in Eight Periods, with a Minute Specification of Dates; comprising a View of Secular History affecting Ecclesiastical Interests—the Limits and Relations of the Church—General Church History—Doctrine and Controversies—Rites and Ceremonies—Institutions—Discipline—Sects and Parties—Ecclesiastical Writers and Literature. With particular reference to the Church History of Great Britain. To which are added, Lists of Patriarchs, Popes and Archbishops of Canterbury, and of Councils. 8vo. \$4 25.

RUSSELL, Rev. M. A Connection of Sacred and Profane History, from the Death of Joshua to the Decline of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Intended to complete the Works of Shuckford and Prieux. 3 vols. 8vo. \$12 00.

SANDERSON, Bishop. Sermons of; with a Life of the author, by Izaak Walton, and an Introductory Essay, by the Rev. R. Montgomery, 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

"Of Bishop Sanderson, Anthony A. Wood remarks, that 'Whether you consider him in his writings or conversation, from his first book of Logic to his Divinity, Lectures, Sermons, and other excellent discourses, the vastness of his judgment, the variety of his learning all laid out for public benefit, his unparalleled meekness, humility and constancy, you cannot but confess that the Church of England could not lose a greater pillar, a better man, and more accomplished divine.'"

SCOTT, John, D.D. The complete Works of. 6 vols. 8vo. \$16 00.

"His Christian Life is one of the finest compositions in our language."

SECKER, Archbishop. The Works of. 6 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.

"Secker is a candid, wise, and practical writer, far preferable to most of his episcopal contemporaries."

SEWELL, Rev. Wm. Christian Morals. 12mo. \$1 50.

SHARP, Archbishop. The Theological Works of. 5 vols. 8vo. \$14 00.

"Archbishop Sharp was a man of learning and talents, a good Hebrew scholar, and one of the most determined antagonists of Hutchinsonianism."—Orme.

— Archbishop (of St. Andrews.) The Life and Times of, by Thomas Stephen. 8vo. \$3 00.

SHERLOCK, Bishop. The Works of, with some account of his Life, summary of each Discourse, Notes, &c., by the Rev. T. S. Hughes. 5 vols. 8vo. \$7 50.

"Dr. Doddridge observes, 'On moral subjects his arguments are generally strong, extending proper for conviction. He is plain and manly, great and animated.'"

SHORT, Thomas Vowler, D.D. A Sketch of the History of the Church of England to the Revolution, 1688. 8vo. \$5 00.

SHUCKFORD, Rev. Samuel. The Sacred and Profane History of the World connected. 2 vols. 8vo. \$8 00.

SKELTON, Rev. Philip. The complete Works of, with Life of the Author. 6 vols. 8vo. \$12 00.

"The Rev. Philip Skelton, in strength and precision, has been ranked with Barrow and Sherlock, and in animation and eloquence, with Massillon and Bossuet."

SOUTH, Robert, D.D. Sermons preached upon several occasions, with a Life of the author. 5 vols. 8vo. \$15 00.

"Dr. South's sermons begin in order of date before the restoration, and come down to nearly to the end of the century. They were much celebrated at the time, and still retain their renown. There is a masculine spirit about them, with a style clear and English, and free from all pedantry."

STACKHOUSE, Rev. Thomas. A History of the Holy Bible, together with an Introduction, Additional Notes, Dissertations, and complete Indexes, by Daniel Dewar, D.D. Illustrated with maps and plans. 1 vol. large 8vo. \$6 00.

"This work has always been esteemed for its utility, and the variety of valuable illustration which the author has brought together from every accessible source."

STILLINGFLEET, Bishop. Origines Britannicæ: or the Antiquities of the British Churches. 8vo. \$2 75.

— Origines Sacræ; or a Rational Account of the Grounds of Natural and Revealed Religion. 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

"A learned and masculine writer, chiefly valuable for his controversial pieces against infidels, Romanists, and Socinians."

TAVERNER, Richard. Postils on the Epistles and Gospels; compiled in the year 1540, and now edited by Edward Cardwell, D.D. 8vo. \$3 50.

TAYLOR, (Bishop,) Jeremy. The whole Works of, with an Essay, Biographical and Critical. 3 vols. imperial 8vo. \$18 00.

"The sermons of Jeremy Taylor are of much higher reputation; far indeed, above any that had preceded them in the English church. His devotional writings are by no means of less celebrity or less value than his sermons. Such are the Life of Christ, the Holy Living and Dying, and the collection of meditations called the Golden Grove."—Hallam's Hist. Lit.

TILLOTSON, Archbishop. The Works of, with Life, by Birch; also a copious Index, and the texts of Scripture carefully compared. 10 vols. 8vo. \$16 00.

TOMLINE, Bishop. Elements of Christian Theology, designed chiefly for the use of Students in Divinity. 2 vols. 8vo. \$5 00.

"The result of extensive reading; the materials are judiciously arranged; the reasonings in it are clear and solid; it is well adapted to the purpose for which it was intended, as a manual for students in divinity; and it may be read with advantage by the most experienced divine."—Bishop Marsh.

TOWNSEND, Rev. Geo. F. The Churchman's Fear; or Liturgical Remarks on the Sundays and Saints' Days, and the lives of the Apostles; with an explanation of every Epistle, Gospel, and first lesson. 2 vols. 8vo. \$7 00.

USHER, Archbishop. Body of Divinity. New edition, revised by Hastings Robinson, D.D. 8vo. \$3 75.

VAN MILDERT, Bishop. The Theological Works of. 6 vols. 8vo. \$18 00.

His works are held in high estimation.

WAKE, Archbishop. The genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers, St. Clement, St. Polycarp, St. Ignatius, St. Barnabas, the Pastor of Hermas; written by those who were present at their sufferings; being, with the New Testament, a complete collection of the most Primitive Antiquity for about 150 years after Christ. Sixth edition, 8vo. \$2 25.

WALL, Rev. Wm. The History of Infant Baptism, together with Mr. Gale's Reflections and Dr. Wall's Defence. New edition, by the Rev. Henry Cotton. 4 vols. 8vo. \$12 00.

An able work, recommended by Bishops Watson, Tomline and others.

WHITBY and Lowman. A Paraphrase and Commentary on the New Testament, with a Treatise on the true Millennium and the Examen Milii; to which is added a Chronology of the New Testament, an Alphabetical table of all the places mentioned in the Gospels, Acts, or the Epistles, with tables of the matters contained and of the words and phrases explained throughout the whole work; by Daniel Whitby, D.D., The Commentary of the Revelation of St. John, by Moses Lowman. 1 vol. imperial 8vo. \$6 50.

"The best Comment on the New Testament, taken in all points of view, is certainly that of Whitby. He has done all that should be done, he is learned, argumentative, and thoroughly orthodox."

-
d
n
n
n
0.
7.
o.
5.
-
00.
es
arp,
as,
gs:
ion
ars
25.
ant
Dr.
nry
00.
hers.
and
tise
hich
Al-
Gos-
tters
ained
D.D.,
n, by
\$6 50.
oints of
be done,

324298 RTheol

Author Newman, John Henry, Cardinal

N

Title Parochial sermons...in two volumes. (1842)

Vol. II

University of Toronto
Library

DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET

Acme Library Card Pocket
LOWE-MARTIN CO. LIMITED

